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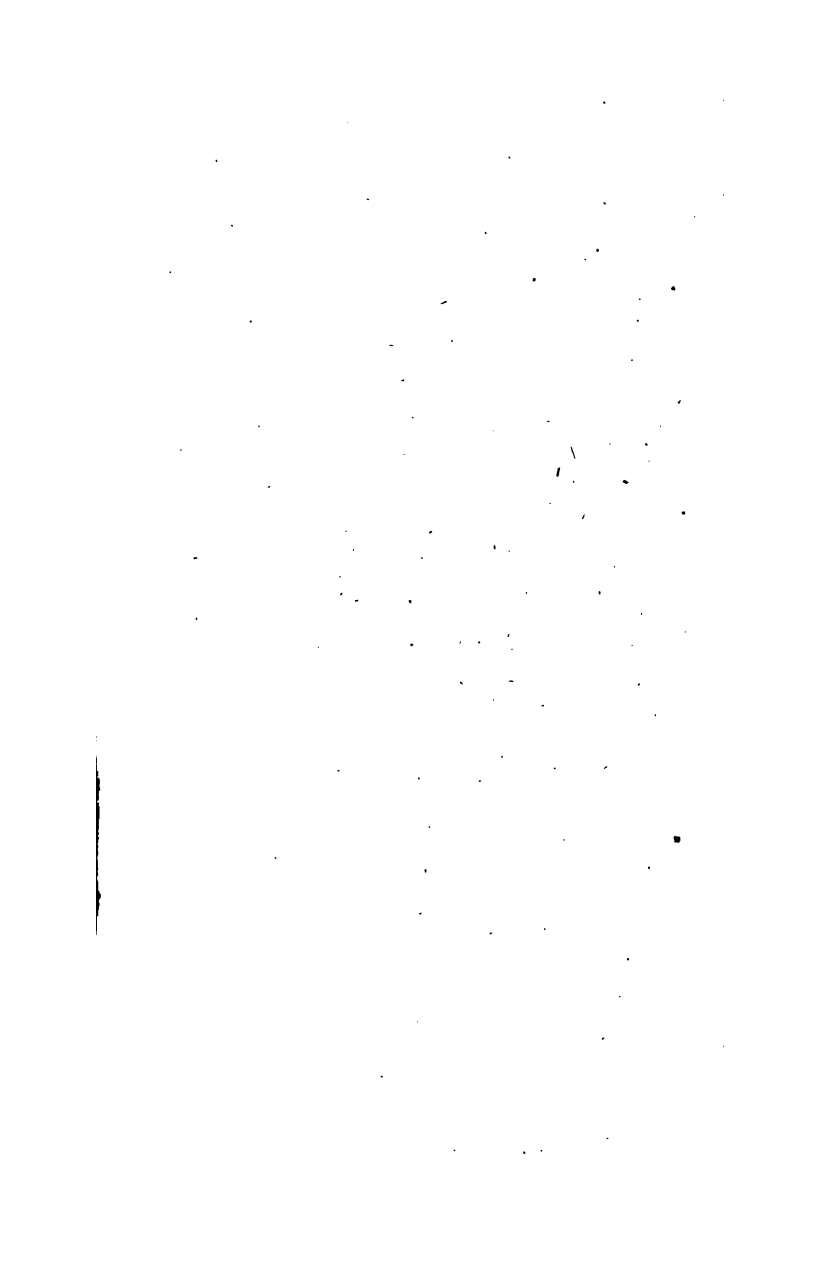


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P R E F A C E S,
B I O G R A P H I C A L
A N D
C R I T I C A L,
TO THE
W O R K S
OF THE
E N G L I S H P O E T S.
BY SAMUEL JOHNSON.

VOLUME THE FOURTH.

L O N D O N:

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M D C C L X X I X.



Ann Dushworth 1782

P R E F A C E S

T O

DENHAM, SPRAT, ROSCOMMON,
ROCHESTER, YALDEN, OTWAY,
DUKE, DORSET, HALIFAX,
STEPNEY, WALSH, GARTH,
KING, J. PHILIPS, SMITH,
P O M F R E T, HUGHES.

D E N H A M.

OF Sir JOHN DENHAM very little is known but what is related of him by Wood, or by himself.

He was born at Dublin in 1615; the only son of Sir John Denham, of Little Horfely in Effex, then chief baron of the Exchequer in Ireland, and of Eleanor, daughter of Sir Garret Moore baron of Mellefont.

Two years afterwards, his father, being made one of the barons of the Exchequer in England, brought him away from his native country, and educated him in London.

In 1631 he was sent to Oxford, where he was considered “ as a dreaming young man, given more to dice and cards than study;” and therefore gave no prognosticks of his future eminence; nor was suspected to conceal, under sluggishness and laxity, a genius born to improve the literature of his country.

When he was, three years afterwards, removed to Lincoln’s Inn, he prosecuted the common law with sufficient appearance of application; yet did not
lose

lose his propensity to cards and dice; but was very often plundered by gamesters.

Being severely reproved for this folly, he professed, and perhaps believed, himself reclaimed; and, to testify the sincerity of his repentance, wrote and published “An Essay upon Gaming.”

He seems to have divided his studies between law and poetry; for, in 1636, he translated the second book of the *Eneid*.

Two years after, his father died; and then, notwithstanding his resolutions and professions, he returned again to the vice of gaming, and lost several thousand pounds that had been left him.

A D E N H A M.

In 1641, he published "The Sophy." This seems to have given him his first hold of the publick attention; for Waller remarked, "that he broke out
"like the Irish rebellion threecore
"thousand strong, when nobody was
"aware, or in the least suspected it." An observation which could have had no propriety, had his poetical abilities been known before.

He was after that pricked for sheriff of Surrey, and made governor of Farnham Castle for the king; but he soon resigned that charge, and retreated to Oxford, where, in 1643, he published "Cooper's Hill."

This poem had such reputation as to excite the common artifice by which
envy

D E N H A M. 5

envy degrades excellence. A report was spread that the performance was not his own, but that he had bought it of a vicar for forty pounds. The same attempt was made to rob Addison of his *Cato*, and Pope of his *Essay on Criticism*.

In 1647, the distresses of the royal family required him to engage in more dangerous employments. He was entrusted by the queen with a message to the king; and, by whatever means, so far softened the ferocity of Hugh Peters, that, by his intercession, admission was procured. Of the king's condescension he has given an account in the dedication of his works.

6 D E N H A M.

He was afterwards employed in carrying on the king's correspondence; and, as he says, discharged this office with great safety to the royalists: and being accidentally discovered by the adverse party's knowledge of Mr. Cowley's hand, he happily escaped both for himself and his friends.

He was yet engaged in a greater undertaking. In April 1648, he conveyed James the duke of York from London into France, and delivered him there to the Queen and prince of Wales. This year he published his translation of "Cato Major."

He

D E N H A M. 7

He now resided in France; as one of the followers of the exiled King; and, to divert the melancholy of their condition, was sometimes enjoined by his master to write occasional verses; one of which amusements was probably his ode or song upon the Embassy to Poland, by which he and lord Crofts procured a contribution of ten thousand pounds from the Scotch, that wandered over that kingdom. Poland was at that time very much frequented by itinerant traders, who, in a country of very little commerce and of great extent, where every man resided on his own estate, contributed very much to the accommodation of life, by

8 D E N H A M.

bringing to every man's house those little necessaries which it was very inconvenient to want, and very troublesome to fetch. I have formerly read, without much reflection, of the multitude of Scotchmen that travelled with their wares in Poland; and that their numbers were not small, the success of this negotiation gives sufficient evidence.

About this time, what estate the war and the gamesters had left him was sold, by order of the parliament; and when, in 1652, he returned to England, he was entertained by the earl of Pembroke

Of

Of the next years of his life there is no account. At the Restoration he obtained, what many missed, the reward of his loyalty ; being made surveyor of the king's buildings, and dignified with the order of the Bath. He seems now to have learned some attention to money ; for Wood says, that he got by his place seven thousand pounds.

After the Restoration he wrote the poem on Prudence and Justice, and perhaps some of his other pieces : and as he appears, whenever any serious question comes before him, to have been a man of piety, he consecrated his poetical powers to religion, and made
a metri-

a metrical version of the Psalms of David. In this attempt he has failed; but, in sacred poetry, who has succeeded?

It might be hoped that the favour of his master and esteem of the publick would now make him happy. But human felicity is short and uncertain: a second marriage brought upon him so much disquiet, as for a time disordered his understanding; and Butler lampooned him for his lunacy. I know not whether the malignant lines were then made publick, nor what provocation incited Butler to do that which no provocation can excuse.

His

D E N H A M. 11

His frenzy lasted not long; and he seems to have regained his full force of mind; for he wrote afterwards his excellent poem upon the death of Cowley, whom he was not long to survive; for on the 19th of March, 1668, he was buried by his side.

DENHAM is deservedly considered as one of the fathers of English poetry. "Denham and Waller," says Prior, "improved our versification, and Dryden perfected it." He has given specimens of various composition, descriptive, ludicrous, didactic, and sublime.

12 D E N H A M.

He appears to have had, in common with almost all mankind, the ambition of being upon proper occasions *a merry fellow*, and in common with most of them to have been by nature, or by early habits, debarred from it. Nothing is less exhilarating than the ludicrousness of Denham. He does not fail for want of efforts : he is familiar, he is gross ; but he is never merry, unless the " Speech against peace in the close " Committee," be excepted. For grave burlesque, however, his imitation of Davenant shews him to have been well qualified.

Of his more elevated occasional poems there is perhaps none that does not deserve commendation. In the verses to
Fletcher,

D E N H A M. 13

Fletcher, we have an image that has
since been often adopted :

“ But whither am I stray’d ? I need

“ not raise

“ Trophies to thee from other mens

“ dispraise ;

“ Nor is thy fame on lesser ruins built,

“ Nor need thy juster title the foul

“ guilt

“ Of eastern kings, who, to secure

“ their reign,

“ Must have their brothers, sons, and

“ kindred slain.”

After Denham, Orrery, in one of his
prologues,

“ Poets are sultans, if they had their will ;

“ For every author would his brother

“ kill.”

And Pope,

“ Should such a man, too fond to rule

“ alone,

“ Bear like the Turk no brother near

“ the throne.”

But this is not the best of his little pieces: it is excelled by his poem to Fanshaw, and his elegy on Cowley.

His praise of Fanshaw's version of Guarini, contains a very spritely and judicious character of a good translator :

“ That servile path thou nobly dost

“ decline,

“ Of tracing word by word, and line

“ by line.

Those

- “ Those are the labour’d births of
 “ flavish brains,
 “ Not the effect of poetry, but pains;
 “ Cheap vulgar arts, whose narrow-
 “ nefs affords
 “ No flight for thoughts, but poorly
 “ ftick at words.
 “ A new and nobler way thou doft
 “ purfue
 “ To make tranflations and translators
 “ too.
 “ They but preserve the afhes, thou
 “ the flame,
 “ True to his fenfe, but truer to his
 “ fame.”

The excellence of thefe lines is
 greater, as the truth which they con-
 tain

tain was not at that time generally known.

His poem on the death of Cowley was his last, and, among his shorter works, his best performance: the numbers are musical, and the thoughts are just.

COOPER'S HILL is the work that confers upon him the rank and dignity of an original author. He seems to have been, at least among us, the author of a species of composition that may be denominated local poetry, of which the fundamental subject is some particular landscape, to be poetically described, with the addition of such embellishments as may be supplied by
histo-

historical retrospection, or incidental meditation.

To trace a new scheme of poetry has in itself a very high claim to praise, and its praise is yet more when it is apparently copied by Garth and Pope; after whose names little will be gained by an enumeration of smaller poets, that have left scarce a corner of the island undignified by rhyme, or blank verse.

COOPER'S HILL, if it be maliciously inspected, will not be found without its faults. The digressions are too long, the morality too frequent, and the sentiments sometimes such as will not bear a rigorous enquiry.

The four verses, which, since Dryden has commended them, almost every writer for a century past has imitated, are generally known :

“ O could I flow like thee, and make
“ thy stream

“ My great example, as it is my
“ theme!

“ Tho’ deep yet clear; tho’ gentle, yet
“ not dull;

“ Strong without rage, without o’er-
“ flowing full.”

The lines are in themselves not perfect; for most of the words, thus artfully opposed, are to be understood simply on one side of the comparison, and metaphorically on the other; and if
there

D E N H A M. , 19

there be any language which does not express intellectual operations by material images, into that language they cannot be translated. But so much meaning is comprised in so few words; the particulars of resemblance are so perspicaciously collected, and every mode of excellence separated from its adjacent fault by so nice a line of limitation; the different parts of the sentence are so accurately adjusted; and the flow of the last couplet is so smooth and sweet, that the passage, however celebrated, has not been praised above its merit. It has beauty peculiar to itself, and must be numbered among those felicities which cannot be pro-

duced at will by wit and labour, but must arise unexpectedly in some hour propitious to poetry.

He appears to have been one of the first that understood the necessity of emancipating translation from the drudgery of counting lines and interpreting single words. How much this servile practice obscured the clearest and deformed the most beautiful parts of the ancient authors, may be discovered by a perusal of our earlier versions; some of them the works of men well qualified not only by critical knowledge, but by poetical genius, who yet, by a mistaken ambition of exactness, degraded at once their originals and themselves.

Den-

Denham saw the better way, but has not pursued it with great success. His versions of Virgil are not pleasing; but they taught Dryden to please better. His poetical imitation of Tully on "Old Age" has neither the clearness of prose, nor the spriteliness of poetry.

The "strength of Denham," which Pope so emphatically mentions, is to be found in many lines and couplets, which convey much meaning in few words, and exhibit the sentiment with more weight than bulk.

On the Thames.

“ Though with those streams he no
“ resemblance hold,

“ Whose foam is amber, and their
“ gravel gold;

“ His genuine and less guilty wealth
“ t’ explore,

“ Search not his bottom, but survey
“ his shore.”

On Strafford.

“ His wisdom such, at once it did
“ appear

“ Three kingdoms wonder, and three
“ kingdoms fear;

“ Whilst

- “ Whilst single he stood forth, and
 “ seem’d, although
 “ Each had an army, as an equal
 “ foe.
 “ Such was his force of eloquence,
 “ to make
 “ The hearers more concern’d than
 “ he that spake;
 “ Each seem’d to act that part he
 “ came to see,—
 “ And none was more a looker-on:
 “ than he;
 “ So did he move our passions, some
 “ were known
 “ To wish, for the defence, the crime
 “ their own.

24 D E N H A M.

“ Now private pity strove with pub-

“ lick hate,

“ Reason with rage, and eloquence

“ with fate.”

On Cowley.

“ To him no author was unknown,

“ Yet what he wrote was all his

“ own;

“ Horace’s wit, and Virgil’s state,

“ He did not steal, but emulate!

“ And when he would like them

“ appear,

“ Their garb, but not their cloaths,

“ did wear.”

As

As one of Denham's principal claims to the regard of posterity arises from his improvement of our numbers, his versification ought to be considered. It will afford that pleasure which arises from the observation of a man of right natural judgement forsaking bad copies by degrees, and advancing towards a better practice, as he gains more confidence in himself.

In his translation of Virgil, written when he was about twenty-one years old, may be still found the old manner of continuing the sense ungracefully from verse to verse.

“ Then

" Then all those
 " Who in the dark our fury did
 " escape,
 " Returning, know our borrow'd
 " arms, and shape,
 " And differing dialect: then their
 " numbers swell
 " And grow upon us; first Chorcæbus
 " fell
 " Before Minerva's altar; next did
 " bleed
 " Just Repheus, whom no Trojan
 " did exceed
 " In virtue, yet the gods his fate
 " decreed.

" Then

- " Then Hypanis and Dymas, wound-
 " ed by
 " Their friends; nor thee, Pantheus,
 " thy piety,
 " Nor consecrated mitre, from the
 " fame
 " Ill fate could save; my country's
 " funeral flame
 " And Troy's cold ashes I attest, and
 " call
 " To witness for myself, that in their
 " fall
 " No foes, no death, nor danger I
 " declin'd,
 " Did, and deserv'd no less, my fate
 " to find."

From

From this kind of concatenated metre he afterwards refrained, and taught his followers the art of concluding their sense in couplets; which has perhaps been with rather too much constancy pursued.

This passage exhibits one of those triplets which are not infrequent in this first essay, but which it is to be supposed his maturer judgement disapproved, since in his latter works he has totally forborn them.

His rhymes are such as seem found without difficulty, by following the sense; and are for the most part as exact at least as those of other poets, though now and then the reader is shifted off with what he can get.

“ O how *transform'd* !

“ How much unlike that Hector,

“ who *return'd*

“ Clad in Achilles' spoils !”

And again,

“ From thence a thousand lesser poets

“ *sprung,*

“ Like petty princes from the fall of

“ *Rome.*”

Sometimes the weight of rhyme is
laid upon a word too feeble to sustain
it :

“ Troy confounded falls

“ From all her glories : if it might

“ have stood

“ By

30 D E N H A M.

“ By any power, by this right hand

“ it *shou'd*.

“ —And though my outward' state

“ misfortune *bath*

“ Deprest thus low, it cannot reach

“ my faith.”

“ —Thus by his fraud and our own

“ faith o'ercome,

“ A feigned tear destroys us, against

“ *whom*

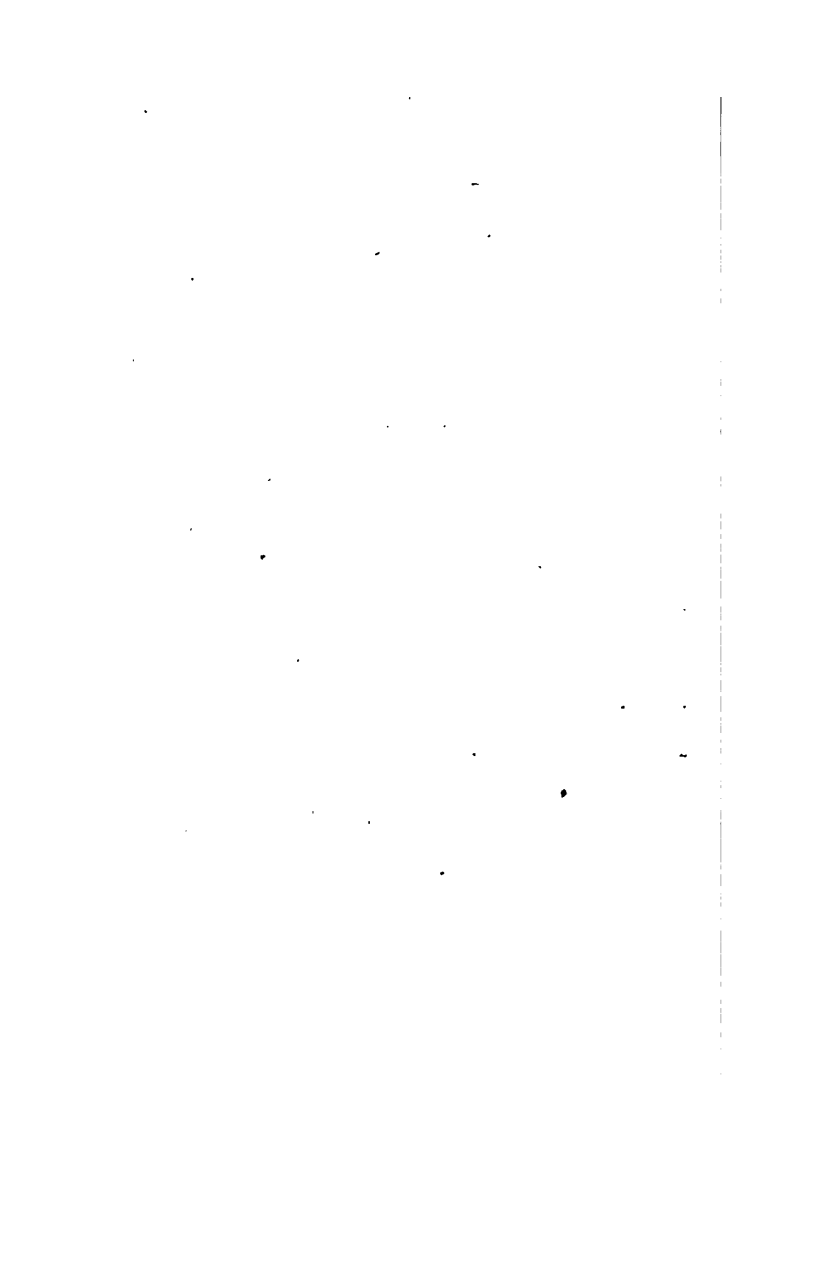
“ Tydides nor Achilles could prevail,

“ Nor ten years conflict, nor a thou-

“ sand fail.”

He is not very careful to vary the ends of his verses: in one passage the word *die* rhimes three couplets in fix.

Most of these petty faults are in his first productions, when he was less skilful, or at least less dexterous in the use of words; and though they had been more frequent, they could only have lessened the grace, not the strength, of his composition. He is one of the writers that improved our taste, and advanced our language, and whom we ought therefore to read with gratitude, though, having done much, he left much to do.



S P R A T.

THOMAS SPRAT was born in 1636, at Tallaton in Devonshire, the son of a clergyman; and having been educated, as he tells of himself, not at Westminster or Eaton, but at a little school by the churchyard side, became a commoner of Wadham College in Oxford in 1651; and, being chosen scholar next year, proceeded through the usual academical course, and in 1657 became master of arts. He

b

ob-

obtained a fellowship, and commenced poet.

In 1659, his poem on the death of Oliver was published, with those of Dryden and Waller. In his dedication to Dr. Wilkins he appears a very willing and liberal encomiast, both of the living and the dead. He implores his patron's excuse of his verses, both as falling *so infinitely below the full and sublime genius of that excellent poet who made this way of writing free of our nation, and being so little equal and proportioned to the renown of the prince on whom they were written; such great actions and lives deserving to be the subject of the noblest pens and most divine phantasies.* He proceeds: *Having so long experienced your*
care

care and indulgence, and been formed, as it were, by your own hands, not to entitle you to any thing which my meanness produces, would be not only injustice but sacrilege.

He published the same year a poem on the *Plague of Athens*; a subject of which it is not easy to say what could recommend it. To these he added afterwards a poem on Mr. Cowley's death.

After the Restoration he took orders, and by Cowley's recommendation was made chaplain to the duke of Buckingham, whom he is said to have helped in writing the *Rehearsal*. He was likewise chaplain to the king.

As he was the favourite of Wilkins, at whose house began those philosophi-

phical conferences and enquiries, which in time produced the Royal Society, he was consequently engaged in the same studies, and became one of the fellows; and when, after their incorporation, something seemed necessary to reconcile the publick to the new institution, he undertook to write its history, which he published in 1667. This is one of the few books which selection of sentiment and elegance of diction have been able to preserve, though written upon a subject flux and transitory. The History of the Royal Society is now read not with the wish to know what they were then doing, but how their transactions are exhibited by Sprat.

In

In the next year he published *Observations on Sorbier's Voyage into England, in a Letter to Mr. Wren*. This is a work not ill performed ; but perhaps rewarded with at least its full proportion of praise.

In 1668 he published Cowley's Latin poems, and prefixed in Latin the Life of the Author ; which he afterwards amplified, and placed before Cowley's English works, which were by will committed to his care.

Ecclesiastical benefices now fell fast upon him. In 1668 he became a prebendary of Westminster, and had afterwards the church of St. Margaret, adjoining to the Abbey. He was in 1680 made canon of Windsor, in 1683 dean

of Westminster, and in 1684 bishop of Rochester.

The Court having thus a claim to his diligence and gratitude, he was required to write the History of the Rye-house Plot; and in 1685 published *A true Account and Declaration of the horrid Conspiracy against the late King, his present Majesty, and the present Government*; a performance which he thought convenient, after the Revolution, to extenuate and excuse.

The same year, being clerk of the closet to the king, he was made dean of the chapel-royal; and the year afterwards received the last proof of his master's confidence, by being appointed one of the commissioners for ecclesiasti-

cal affairs. On the critical day, when the *Declaration* distinguished the true sons of the church of England, he stood neuter, and permitted it to be read at Westminster ; but pressed none to violate his conscience ; and when the bishop of London was brought before them, gave his voice in his favour.

Thus far he suffered interest or obedience to carry him ; but further he refused to go. When he found that the powers of the ecclesiastical commission were to be exercised against those who had refused the Declaration, he wrote to the lords, and other commissioners, a formal profession of his unwillingness to exercise that authority any longer, and withdrew himself from them. Af-

ter they had read his letter, they adjourned for six months, and scarcely ever met afterwards.

When king James was frightened away, and a new government was to be settled, Sprat was one of those who considered, in a conference, the great question, whether the Crown was vacant, and manfully spoke in favour of his old master.

He complied, however, with the new establishment, and was left unmolested; but in 1692 a strange attack was made upon him by one *Robert Young* and *Stephen Blackhead*, both men convicted of infamous crimes, and both, when the scheme was laid, prisoners in Newgate. These men drew up an association, in which they whose names were subscribed
de-

declared their resolution to restore king James; to seize the princeſs of Orange, dead or alive; and to be ready with thirty thouſand men to meet king James when he ſhould land. To this they put the names of Sancroft, Sprat, Marlborough, Salifbury, and others. The copy of Dr. Sprat's name was obtained by a fictitious requeſt, to which an answer *in his own hand* was deſired. His hand was copied ſo well, that he confeſſed it might have deceived himſelf. Black-head, who had carried the letter, being ſent again with a plauſible meſſage, was very curious to ſee the houſe, and particularly importunate to be let into the ſtudy; where, as is ſuppoſed, he deſigned to leave the Affociation. This
how-

however was denied him, and he dropt it in a flower-pot in the parlour.

Young now laid an information before the Privy Council; and May 7, 1692, the bishop was arrested, and kept at a messenger's under a strict guard eleven days. His house was searched, and directions were given that the flower-pots should be inspected. The messengers however missed the room in which the paper was left. Blackhead went therefore a third time; and, finding his paper where he had left it, brought it away.

The bishop, having been enlarged, was, on June the 10th and 13th, examined again before the Privy Council, and confronted with his accusers. Young
per-

persisted with the most obdurate impudence, against the strongest evidence; but the resolution of Blackhead by degrees gave way. There remained at last no doubt of the bishop's innocence, who, with great prudence and diligence, traced the progress, and detected the characters of the two informers, and published an account of his own examination, and deliverance; which made such an impression upon him, that he commemorated it through life by an yearly day of thanksgiving.

With what hope, or what interest, the villains had contrived an accusation which they must know themselves utterly unable to prove, was never discovered.

After

After this, he passed his days in the quiet exercise of his function. When the cause of Sacheverell put the publick in commotion, he honestly appeared among the friends of the church. He lived to his seventy-ninth year, and died May 20, 1713.

Burnet is not very favourable to his memory; but he and Burnet were old rivals. On some publick occasion they both preached before the house of commons. There prevailed in those days an indecent custom: when the preacher touched any favourite topick in a manner that delighted his audience, their approbation was expressed by a loud *hum*, continued in proportion to their zeal or pleasure. When Burnet preached,

ed,

ed, part of his congregation *hummed* so loudly and so long, that he sat down to enjoy it, and rubbed his face with his handkerchief. When Sprat preached, he likewise was honoured with the like animating *hum*; but he stretched out his hand to the congregation, and cried, “Peace, peace, I pray you, “peace.”

This I was told in my youth by an old man, who had been no careless observer of the passages of those times.

Burnet’s sermon, says Salmon, was remarkable for sedition, and Sprat’s for loyalty. Burnet had the thanks of the house; Sprat had no thanks, but a good living from the king; which, he said,

was of as much value as the thanks of the Commons.

The works of Sprat, besides his few poems, are, The History of the Royal Society, the Life of Cowley, The Answer to Sorbiere, The History of the Rye-house Plot; the Relation of his own Examination, and a volume of Sermons. I have heard it observed, with great justness, that every book is of a different kind, and that each has its distinct and characteristical excellence.

My business is only with his poems. He considered Cowley as a model; and supposed that as he was imitated, perfection was approached. Nothing therefore but Pindarick liberty was to be expected. There is in his few productions

tions no want of such conceits as he thought excellent; and of those our judgement may be settled by the first that appears in his praise of Cromwell, where he says that Cromwell's *fame, like man, will grow white as it grows old.*



ROSCOMMON.

WENTWORTH DILLON, earl of Roscommon, was born in Ireland, during the lieutenancy of Strafford, who, being his godfather, gave him his own surname. His father had been converted by Usher to the protestant religion; and when the popish rebellion broke out, Strafford, thinking the family in great danger from the fury of the Irish, sent for his godson, and placed him at his own seat in York-shire.

2 R O S C O M M O N.

shire, where he was instructed in Latin; which he learned so as to write it with purity and elegance, though he was never able to retain the rules of grammar..

Such is the account given by Mr. *Fenton*, from whose notes on Waller most of this account must be borrowed, though I know not whether all that he relates is certain. The instructor whom he assigns to Roscommon is one Dr. *Hall*, by whom he cannot mean the famous *Hall*, then an old man and a bishop.

When the storm broke out upon Strafford, his house was a shelter no longer; and Dillon, by the advice of Usher, went to *Cæn*, where the Protestants

testants had then an university, and continued his studies under *Bochart*.

Young Dillon, who was sent to study under *Bochart*, and who is represented as having already made great proficiency in literature, could not be more than nine years old. *Strafford* went to govern Ireland in 1633, and was put to death eight years afterwards. That he was sent to Caen is certain; that he was a great scholar may be doubted.

At Caen he is said to have had some preternatural intelligence of his father's death.

“ The lord Roscommon, being a boy
 “ of ten years of age, at Caen in Nor-
 “ mandy, one day was, as it were, mad-
 “ ly extravagant, in playing, leaping,

4 R O S C O M M O N.

“ getting over the tables, boards, &c.
“ He was wont to be sober enough;
“ they said, God grant this bodes no ill-
“ luck to him. In the heat of this ex-
“ travagant fit, he cries out, *My father*
“ *is dead*. A fortnight after news came
“ from Ireland that his father was dead.
“ This account I had from Mr. Knolles,
“ who was his governor, and then with
“ him,—since secretary to the earl of
“ Strafford; and I have heard his lord-
“ ship’s relations confirm the same.” *Au-
brey’s Miscellany*.

The present age is very little inclined to favour any accounts of this kind, nor will the name of Aubrey much recommend it to credit: it ought not, however, to be omitted, because better evidence

dence of a fact cannot easily be found than is here offered, and it must be by preserving such relations that we may at last judge how much they are to be regarded. If we stay to examine this account, we shall see difficulties on both sides : here is a relation of a fact given by a man who had no interest to deceive, and who could not be deceived himself ; and here is, on the other hand, a miracle which produces no effect ; the order of nature is interrupted to discover not a future, but only a distant event, the knowledge of which is of no use to him to whom it is revealed. Between these difficulties, what way shall be found ? Is reason or testimony to be rejected ? I believe what Osborne says

6 ROSCOMMON.

of an appearance of sanctity, may be applied to such impulses or anticipations as this: *Do not wholly slight them, because they may be true; but do not easily trust them, because they may be false.*

The state both of England and Ireland was at this time such, that he who was absent from either country had very little temptation to return: and therefore Roscommon, when he left Caen, travelled into Italy, and amused himself with its antiquities, and particularly with medals, in which he acquired uncommon skill.

At the Restoration, with the other friends of monarchy, he came to England, was made captain of the band of pensioners, and learned so much of
the

the dissoluteness of the court, that he addicted himself immoderately to gaming, by which he was engaged in frequent quarrels, and which undoubtedly brought upon him its usual concomitants, extravagance and distress.

After some time a dispute about part of his estate forced him into Ireland, where he was made by the duke of Ormond captain of the guards, and met with an adventure thus related by *Fenton*:

“ He was at Dublin as much as ever
 “ distempered with the same fatal affec-
 “ tion for play, which engaged him in one
 “ adventure that well deserves to be re-
 “ lated. As he returned to his lodgings
 “ from a gaming table, he was attacked

8 R O S C O M M O N .

“ in the dark by three ruffians, who
“ were employed to affassinate him.
“ The earl defended himself with so
“ much resolution, that he dispatched
“ one of the aggressors ; whilst a gen-
“ tleman, accidentally passing that way,
“ interposed and disarmed another : the
“ third secured himself by flight. This
“ generous assistant was a disbanded of-
“ ficer, of a good family and fair re-
“ putation ; who, by what we call the
“ partiality of fortune, to avoid cen-
“ suring the iniquities of the times,
“ wanted even a plain suit of cloaths to
“ make a decent appearance at the
“ Castle. But his lordship, on this oc-
“ casion, presenting him to the duke of
“ Ormond, with great importunity pre-
“ vailed

“vailed with his grace, that he might
 “reign his post of captain of the guards
 “to his friend; which for about three
 “years the gentleman enjoyed, and,
 “upon his death, the duke returned
 “the commission to his generous bene-
 “factor.”

When he had finished his business, he
 returned to London; was made master
 of the horse to the dutchess of York;
 and married the lady Frances, daughter
 of the earl of Burlington, and widow of
 colonel Courteney.

He now busied his mind with literary
 projects, and formed the plan of a so-
 ciety for refining our language, and
 fixing its standard; *in imitation*, says
 Fenton, *of those learned and polite socie-*
ties.

10 R O S C O M M O N.

ties with which he had been acquainted abroad. In this design his friend Dryden is said to have assisted him.

The same design, it is well known, was revived by Dr. Swift in the ministry of Oxford; but it has never since been publicly mentioned, though at that time great expectations were formed by some at least of its establishment and its effects. Such a society might, perhaps, without much difficulty be collected; but that it would produce what is expected from it, may be doubted.

The Italian academy seems to have obtained its end. The language was refined, and so fixed that it has changed but little. The French academy thought that they refined their language, and
4 doubt-

doubtless thought rightly; but the event has not shewn that they fixed it; for the French of the present time is very different from that of the last century.

In this country an academy could be expected to do but little. If an academicians's place were profitable, it would be given by interest; if attendance were gratuitous, it would be rarely paid, and no man would endure the least disgust, Unanimity is impossible, and debate would separate the assembly.

But suppose the philological decree made and promulgated, what would be its authority? In absolute governments, there is sometimes a general reverence paid to all that has the sanction of power, and the countenance of greatness.

ness. How little this is the state of our country needs not to be told. We live in an age in which it is a kind of public sport to refuse all respect that cannot be enforced. The edicts of an English academy would probably be read by many, only that they might be sure to disobey them.

That our language is in perpetual danger of corruption cannot be denied ; but what prevention can be found ? The present manners of the nation would deride authority, and therefore nothing is left but that every writer should criticise himself.

All hopes of new literary institutions were quickly suppressed by the contentious turbulence of king James's reign ;
and

and Roscommon, foreseeing that some violent concussion of the State was at hand, purposed to retire to Rome, alleging, that *it was best to sit near the chimney when the chamber smoaked*; a sentence of which the application seems not very clear.

His departure was delayed by the gout; and he was so impatient either of hinderance or of pain, that he submitted himself to a French empirick, who is said to have repelled the disease into his bowels.

At the moment in which he expired, he uttered, with an energy of voice that expressed the most fervent devotion, two lines of his own version of *Dies Viæ* :

My

My God, my Father, and my Friend,
Do not forsake me in my end.

—He died in 1684; and was buried with great pomp in Westminster-abbey.

His poetical character is given by Mr. Fenton :

“ In his writings,” says Fenton, “ we
“ view the image of a mind which was
“ naturally serious and solid; richly fur-
“ nished and adorned with all the orna-
“ ments of learning, unaffectedly disposed
“ in the most regular and elegant order.
“ His imagination might have probably
“ been more fruitful and sprightly, if his
“ judgement had been less severe. But
“ that severity (delivered in a masculine,
“ clear, succinct stile) contributed to
“ make

“ make him so eminent in the didactical
 “ manner, that no man, with justice, can
 “ affirm he was ever equalled by any of
 “ our nation, without confessing at the
 “ same time that he is inferior to none.
 “ In some other kinds of writing his
 “ genius seems to have wanted fire to
 “ attain the point of perfection; but
 “ who can attain it?”

From this account of the riches of
 his mind, who would not imagine that
 they had been displayed in large vo-
 lumes and numerous performances?
 Who would not, after the perusal of
 this character, be surpris'd to find that
 all the proofs of this genius, and know-
 ledge and judgement, are not sufficient
 to form a single book, or to appear
 other-

otherwise than in conjunction with the works of some other writer of the same petty size? But thus it is that characters are written: we know somewhat, and we imagine the rest. The observation, that his imagination would probably have been more fruitful and sprightly if his judgement had been less severe, may be answered, by a remarker somewhat inclined to cavil, by a contrary supposition, that his judgement would probably have been less severe, if his imagination had been more fruitful. It is ridiculous to oppose judgement to imagination; for it does not appear that men have necessarily less of one as they have more of the other.

We must allow of Roscommon, what Fenton has not mentioned so distinctly as he ought, and, what is yet very much to his honour, that he is perhaps the only correct writer in verse before Addison; and that, if there are not so many or so great beauties in his compositions as in those of some contemporaries, there are at least fewer faults. Nor is this his highest praise; for Mr. Pope has celebrated him as the only moral writer of king Charles's reign :

Unhappy Dryden ! in all Charles's
days,

Roscommon only boasts unspotted
lays.

His great work is his Essay on translated Verse; of which Dryden writes

thus in the preface to his Miscellanies :

“ It was my lord Roscommon’s Essay
 “ on translated Verse,” says Dryden,
 “ which made me uneasy, till I tried
 “ whether or no I was capable of fol-
 “ lowing his rules, and of reducing the
 “ speculation into practice. For many
 “ a fair precept in poetry is like a
 “ seeming demonstration in mathema-
 “ ticks, very specious in the diagram,
 “ but failing in the mechanick opera-
 “ tion. I think I have generally ob-
 “ served his instructions : I am sure my
 “ reason is sufficiently convinced both of
 “ their truth and usefulness ; which, in
 “ other words, is to confess no less a
 “ vanity than to pretend that I have, at
 “ least



“least in some places, made examples
“to his rules.”

This declaration of Dryden will, I am afraid, be found little more than one of those cursory civilities which one author pays to another; for when the sum of lord Roscommon’s precepts is collected, it will not be easy to discover how they can qualify their reader for a better performance of translation than might have been attained by his own reflections.

He that can abstract his mind from the elegance of the poetry, and confine it to the sense of the precepts, will find no other direction than that the author should be suitable to the translator’s genius; that he should be such as may

deserve a translation; that he who intends to translate him should endeavour to understand him; that perspicuity should be studied, and unusual and uncouth names sparingly inserted; and that the stile of the original should be copied in its elevation and depression. These are the rules that are celebrated as so definite and important, and for the delivery of which to mankind so much honour has been paid. Roscommon has indeed deserved his praises, had they been given with discernment, and bestowed not on the rules themselves, but the art with which they are introduced, and the decorations with which they are adorned.

The

The Essay, though generally excellent, is not without its faults. The story of the Quack, borrowed from Boileau, was not worth the importation : he has confounded the British and Saxon mythology :

I grant that from some mossy idol oak,
In double rhymes, our *Thor* and *Woden*
spoke.

The oak, as I think Gildon has observed, belonged to the British druids, and *Thor* and *Woden* were Saxon deities. Of the *double rhymes*, which he so liberally supposes, he certainly had no knowledge.

His interposition of a long paragraph of blank verses is unwarrantably licentious. Latin poets might as well have

22 R O S C O M M O N.

introduced a series of iambicks among their heroicks.

His next work is the translation of the Art of Poetry ; which has received, in my opinion, not less praise than it deserves. Blank verse, left merely to its numbers, has little operation either on the ear or mind : it can hardly support itself without bold figures and striking images. A poem frigidly didactick, without rhyme, is so near to prose, that the reader only scorns it for pretending to be verse.

Having disentangled himself from the difficulties of rhyme, he may justly be expected to give the sense of Horace with great exactness, and to suppress no subtilty of sentiment for the difficulty
of

of expressing it. This demand, however, his translation will not satisfy; what he found obscure, I do not know that he has ever cleared.

Among his smaller works, the Eclogue of Virgil and the *Dies Iræ* are well translated; though the best line in the *Dies Iræ* is borrowed from Dryden. In return, succeeding poets have borrowed from Roscommon.

In the verses on the Lap-dog, the pronouns *thou* and *you* are offensively confounded; and the turn at the end is from Waller.

His versions of the two odes of Horace are made with great liberty, which is not recompensed by much elegance or vigour.

His

24 R O S C O M M O N.

His political verses are spritely, and when they were written must have been very popular.

Of the scene of *Guarini*, and the prologue to *Pompey*, Mrs. Phillips, in her letters to Sir Charles Cotterel, has given the history.

“ Lord Roscommon,” says she, “ is
“ certainly one of the most promising
“ young noblemen in Ireland. He has
“ paraphrased a Psalm admirably, and
“ a scene of *Pastor Fido* very finely, in
“ some places much better than Sir
“ Richard Fanshawe. This was under-
“ taken merely in compliment to me,
“ who happened to say that it was
“ the best scene in Italian, and the
“ worst

“worst in English. He was only two
“hours about it. It begins thus:

“Dear happy groves, and you the
“dark retreat
“Of silent horror, Rest’s eternal
“feat.”

From these lines, which are since
somewhat mended, it appears that he
did not think a work of two hours fit
to endure the eye of criticism without
revival.

When Mrs. Phillips was in Ireland,
some ladies that had seen her transla-
tion of Pompey, resolved to bring it on
the stage at Dublin; and, to promote
7 their

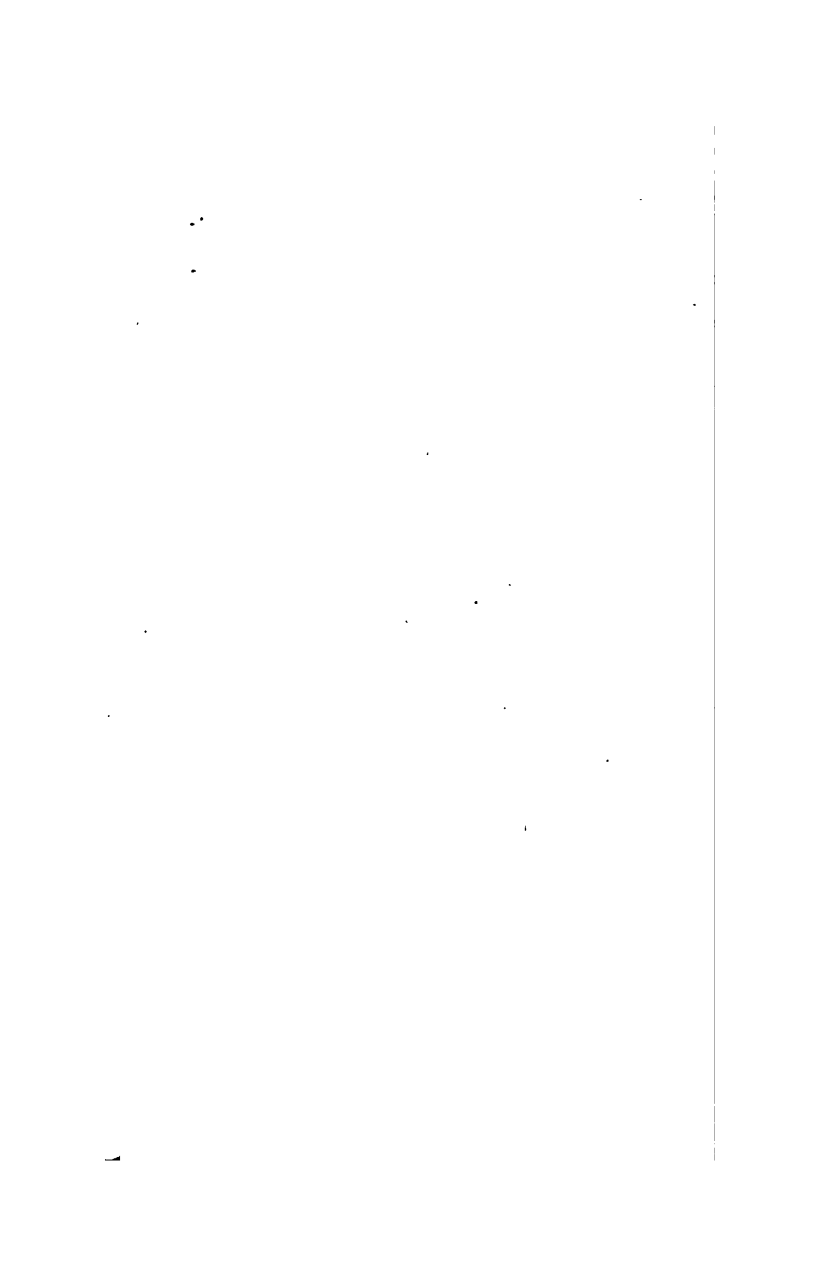
their design, Lord Roscommon gave them a prologue, and Sir Edward Dering an epilogue; “ which,” says he, “ are the best performances of those kinds I ever saw.” If this is not criticism, it is at least gratitude. The thought of bringing Cæsar and Pompey into Ireland, the only country over which Cæsar never had any power, is lucky.

Of Roscommon’s works, the judgement of the publick seems to be right. He is elegant, but not great; he never labours after exquisite beauties, and he seldom falls into gross faults. His versification is smooth, but rarely vigorous, and his rhymes are remarkably exact.

He

He improved taste, if he did not enlarge knowledge, and may be numbered among the benefactors to English literature.-





ROCHESTER.

JOH^N WILMOT, afterwards earl of Rochester, the son of Henry earl of Rochester, better known by the title of Lord Wilnot, so often mentioned in Clarendon's History, was born in April, 1648, at Ditchley in Oxfordshire. After a grammatical education at the school of Burford, he entered a nobleman into Wadham College in 1659, only eleven years old; and in 1661, at thirteen, was, with some other persons

2 R O C H E S T E R.

of high rank, made master of arts by Lord Clarendon in person.

He travelled afterwards into France and Italy; and, at his return, devoted himself to a Court. In 1665 he went to sea with Sandwich, and distinguished himself at Bergen by uncommon intrepidity; and the next summer served again on board Sir Edward Spragge, who, in the heat of the engagement, having a message of reproof to send to one of his captains, could find no man ready to carry it but Wilmot, who, in an open boat, went and returned amidst the storm of shot.

But his reputation for bravery was not lasting: he was reproached with flinching away in street quarrels, and
leaving

ROCHESTER. 3

leaving his companions to shift as they could without him; and Sheffield duke of Buckingham has left a story of his refusal to fight him.

He had very early an inclination to intemperance, which he totally subdued in his travels; but when he became a courtier, he unhappily addicted himself to dissolute and vitious company, by which his principles were corrupted, and his manners depraved. He lost all sense of religious restraint; and, finding it not convenient to admit the authority of laws which he was resolved not to obey, sheltered his wickedness behind infidelity.

As he excelled in that noisy and licentious merriment which wine incites,

4. R O C H E S T E R.

his companions eagerly encouraged him in excess, and he willingly indulged it ; till, as he confessed to Dr. Burnet, he was for five years together continually drunk, or so much inflamed by frequent ebriety, as in no interval to be master of himself.

In this state he played many frolicks, which it is not for his honour that we should remember, and which are not now distinctly known. He often pursued low amours in mean disguises, and always acted with great exactness and dexterity the characters which he assumed.

He once erected a stage on Tower-hill, and harangued the populace as a mountebank ; and, having made physick

ROCHESTER. 5

sick part of his study, is said to have practised it successfully.

He was so much in favour with king Charles, that he was made one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber, and comptroller of Woodstock Park.

Having an active and inquisitive mind, he never, except in his paroxysms of intemperance, was wholly negligent of study: he read what is considered as polite learning so much, that he is mentioned by Wood as the greatest scholar of all the nobility. Sometimes he retired into the country, and amused himself with writing libels, in which he did not pretend to confine himself to truth.

His favourite author in French was Boileau, and in English Cowley.

4 R O C H E S T E R.

Thus in a course of drunken gaiety, and gross sensuality, with intervals of study perhaps yet more criminal, with an avowed contempt of all decency and order, a total disregard to every moral, and a resolute denial of every religious obligation, he lived worthless and useless, and blazed out his youth and his health in lavish voluptuousness; till, at the age of one and thirty, he had exhausted the fund of life, and reduced himself to a state of weakness and decay.

At this time he was led to an acquaintance with Dr. Burnet, to whom he laid open with great freedom the tenour of his opinions, and the course of his life, and from whom he received such conviction

R O C H E S T E R. 7

vision of the reasonableness of moral duty, and the truth of Christianity, as produced a total change both of his manners and opinions. The account of those salutary conferences is given by Burnet, in a book intituled, *Some Passages of the Life and Death of John earl of Rochester*; which the critick ought to read for its elegance, the philosopher for its arguments, and the saint for its piety. It were an injury to the reader to offer him an abridgement.

He died July 26, 1680, before he had completed his thirty-third year; and was so worn away by a long illness, that life went out without a struggle.

Lord Rochester was eminent for the vigour of his colloquial wit, and re-

8 R O C H E S T E R.

markable for many wild pranks, and sallies of extravagance. The glare of his general character diffused itself upon his writings; the compositions of a man whose name was heard so often, were certain of attention, and from many readers certain of applause. This blaze of reputation is not yet quite extinguished, and his poetry still retains some splendour beyond that which genius has bestowed.

Wood and Burnet give us reason to believe, that much was imputed to him which he did not write. I know not by whom the original collection was made, or by what authority its genuineness was ascertained. The first edition was published in the year of his death, with an
air

air of concealment, professing in the title-page to be printed at *Antwerp*.

Of some of the pieces, however, there is no doubt. The Imitation of Horace's Satire, the Verses to Lord Mulgrave, the Satire against Man, the Verses upon *Nothing*, and perhaps some others, are I believe genuine, and perhaps most of those which this collection exhibits.

As he cannot be supposed to have found leisure for any course of continued study, his pieces are commonly short, such as one fit of resolution would produce.

His songs have no particular character: they tell, like other songs, in smooth and easy language, of scorn and kindness, dismissal and desertion, absence

fence and inconstancy, with the common places of artificial courtship. They are commonly smooth and easy; but have little nature, and little sentiment.

His imitation of Horace on Lucilius is not inelegant or unhappy. In the reign of Charles the Second began that adaptation, which has since been very frequent, of ancient poetry to present times, and perhaps few will be found where the parallelism is better preserved than in this. The versification is indeed sometimes careless, but it is sometimes vigorous and weighty.

The strongest effort of his Muse is his poem upon *Nothing*. He is not the first who has chosen this barren topick for the boast of his fertility. There

is

R O C H E S T E R. 11

is a poem called *Nil in Latia* by *Pasferat*, a poet and critick of the sixteenth century in France; who, in his own epitaph, expresses his zeal for good poetry thus :

—*Moliter ossa quiescent*

*Sint modo carminibus non onerata
malis.*

His works are not common, and therefore I shall subjoin his verses.

In examining this performance, *Nothing* must be considered as having not only a negative but a kind of positive signification; as, I need not fear thieves, I have *nothing*; and *nothing* is a very powerful protector. In the first part of the sentence it is taken negatively; in the

12 R O C H E S T E R.

the second it is taken positively, as an agent. In one of Boileau's lines it was a question, whether he should use *a rien faire*, or *a ne rien faire*; and the first was preferred, because it gave *rien* a sense in some sort positive. *Nothing* can be a subject only in its positive sense, and such a sense is given it in the first line :

Nothing, thou elder brother ev'n to
shade.

In this line, I know not whether he does not allude to a curious book *de Umbra*, by Wowerus, which, having told the qualities of *Shade*, concludes with a poem in which are these lines :

Jam

Jam primum terram validis circumspice
 claustris
 Suspensam totam, decus admirabile
 mundi
 Terrasque tractusque maris, camposque
 liquentes
 Aeris, & vasti laqueata palatia cœli—
 Omnibus UMBRA prior.

The positive sense is generally preserved, with great skill, through the whole poem; though sometimes, in a subordinate sense, the negative *nothing* is injudiciously mingled. Passerat confounds the two senses.

Another of his most vigorous pieces is his Lampoon on Sir Car Scroop, who,
 in

24 R O C H E S T E R.

in a poem called *The Praise of Satire*,
had some lines like these* :

He who can push into a midnight fray
His brave companion, and then run
away,
Leaving him to be murder'd in the
street,
Then put it off with some buffoon conceit ;
Him, thus dishonour'd, for a wit you
own,
And court him as top fidler of the
town.

This was meant of Rochester, and
drew from him those furious verses; to

* I quote from memory.

which

ROCHESTER 15

which Scroop made in reply an epigram, ending with these lines :

Thou canst hurt no man's fame with
thy ill word ;

Thy pen is full as harmless as thy
sword.

Of the satire against *Man*, Rochester can only claim what remains when all Boileau's part is taken away.

In all his works there is sprightliness and vigour, and every where may be found tokens of a mind which study might have carried to excellence ; and what more can be expected from a life spent in ostentatious contempt of regularity, and ended before the abilities of many other men began to be displayed ?

Poema

16 R O C H E S T E R.

Poema CL. V. JOANNIS PASSERATII, Regij in
Academia Parisiensi Professoris.

Ad ornatissimum virum ERICVM MEMMIVM.

Janus adest, festæ poscunt sua dona Kalendæ,
Munus abest festis quod possim offerre Kalendis.
Siccine Castalius nobis exaruit humor?
Usque aded ingenii nostri est exhausta facultas,
Immunem ut videat redeuntis janitor anni?
Quod nusquā est, potius nova per vestigia quærā.

Ecce autem partes dum sese versat in omnes
Invenit mea Musa NIHIL, ne despice munus.
Nam NIHIL est gemmis, NIHIL est pretiosius
auro.

Huc animum, huc igitur vultus adverte benignos:
Res nova narratur quæ nulli audita priorum,
Ausonii & Graii dixerant cætera vates,
Ausoniæ indictum NIHIL est Græcæque Ca-
mœnæ.

E cœlo

R O C H E S T E R. 17

E coelo quacunque Ceres sua prospicit arva,
 Aut genitor liquidis orbem complectitur ulnis
 Oceanus, NIHIL interitus & originis expers.
 Immortale NIHIL, NIHIL omni parte beatum.
 Quod si hinc majestas & vis divina probatur,
 Num quid honore deum, num quid dignabimur
 aris ?

Conspectu lucis NIHIL est jucundius almae,
 Vere NIHIL, NIHIL irriguo formosius horto,
 Floridius pratis, Zephyri clementius aura ;
 In bello sanctum NIHIL est, Martisque tu-
 multu:

Iustum in pace NIHIL, NIHIL est in foedere
 tutum.

Felix cui NIHIL est, (fuerant hæc vota Tibullo)
 Non timet infidias : fures, incendia temnit :
 Sollicitas sequitur nullo sub iudice lites.
 Ille ipse invictis qui subjicit omnia fati
 Zenonis sapiens, NIHIL admiratur & optat.
 Socraticique gregis fuit ista scientia quondam,

18 R O C H E S T E R.

Scire *NIHIL*, studio cui nunc incumbitur uni.
 Nec quicquam in ludo mavult didicisse juvenus,
 Ad magnas quia ducit opes, & culmen honorum.
 Nosce *NIHIL*, nosces fertur quod Pythagoræ
 Grano hæere fabæ, cui vox adjuncta negantis.
 Multi Mercurio freti duce viscera terræ
 Pura liquefaciunt simul, & patrimonia miscent,
 Arcano instantes operi, & carbonibus atris,
 Qui tandem exhausti damnis, fractique labore,
 Inveniunt atque inventum *NIHIL* usque requirunt.
 Hoc dimetiri non ulla decempeda possit.
 Nec numeret Libycæ numerum qui callet arenæ:
 Et Phœbo ignotum *NIHIL* est, *NIHIL* altius astris.
 Túque, tibi licet eximium sit mentis acumen,
 Omnem in naturam penetrans, & in abdita re-
 rum,
 Pace tua, Memmi, *NIHIL* ignorare vidêris.
 Sole tamen *NIHIL* est, & puro clarius igne.
 Tange *NIHIL*, dicetque *NIHIL* sine corpore
 tangi.

Cerac

ROCHESTER. 19

Cerne NIHIL, cerni dices NIHIL absque colore.

Surdum audit loquiturque NIHIL sine voce,
volâtque

Absque ope pennarum, & graditur sine cruribus
ullis.

Absque loco motuque NIHIL per inane vagatur.

Humano generi utilis NIHIL arte medendi.

Ne rhombos igitur, neu Thessala murmura ten-
tet

Idalia vacuum trajectus arundine pectus,

Neu legat Idæo Dictæum in vertice gramen.

Vulneribus sævi NIHIL auxiliatur amoris.

Vexerit & quemvis trans mœstas portitor undas,

Ad superos imo NIHIL hunc revocabit ab orco.

Inferni NIHIL inflectit præcordia regis,

Parcarumque colos, & inexorabile pensum.

Obruta Phlegræis campis Titania pubes

Fulmineo sensit NIHIL esse potentius ictu:

Porrigitur magni NIHIL extra mœnia mundi:

29 R O C H E S T E R.

Diique NIHIL metuant. Quid longo carmine
plura

Commemorem? virtute NIHIL præstantius ipsa,
Splendidius NIHIL est; NIHIL est Jove denique
majus.

Sed tempus finem argutis imponere nugis:
Ne tibi si multa laudem mea carmina charta,
De NIHILO NIHILI pariant fastidia versus.



Y A L D E N.

THOMAS YALDEN, the sixth son of Mr. John Yalden of Suffex; was born in the city of Exeter in 1671. Having been educated in the grammar-school belonging to Magdalen College in Oxford, he was in 1690, at the age of nineteen, admitted commoner of Magdalen Hall, under the tuition of *Joseph Pullen*; a man whose name is still remembered in the university. He became next year one of the scholars of

2 Y A L D E N.

Magdalen College, where he was distinguished by a lucky accident.

It was his turn, one day, to pronounce a declamation ; and Dr. Hough, the president, happening to attend, thought the composition too good to be the speaker's. Some time after, the doctor, finding him a little irregularly busy in the library, set him an exercise for punishment ; and, that he might not be deceived by any artifice, locked the door. Yalden, as it happened, had been lately reading on the subject given, and produced with little difficulty a composition which so pleased the president, that he told him his former suspicions, and promised to favour him.

Among his contemporaries in the college were Addison and Sacheverell, men who were in those times friends, and who both adopted Yalden to their intimacy. Yalden continued, throughout his life, to think as probably he thought at first, yet did not lose the friendship of Addison.

When Namur was taken by king William, Yalden made an ode. There was never any reign more celebrated by the poets than that of William, who had very little regard for song himself, but happened to employ ministers who pleased themselves with the praise of patronage.

Of this ode mention is made in an humorous poem of that time, called

4 Y A L. D E N.

The Oxford Laureat; in which, after many claims had been made and rejected, Valden is represented as demanding the laurel, and as being called to his trial, instead of receiving a reward,

His crime was for being a felon in verse,

And presenting his theft to the king;

The first was a trick not uncommon or
scarce,

But the last was an impudent thing :

Yet what he had stol'n was so little worth
stealing,

They forgave him the damage and cost;

Had he ta'en the whole ode, as he took
it piece-mealing,

They had fin'd him but ten pence at
most.

The

Y A L D E N. 5.

The poet whom he was charged with robbing was Congreve.

He wrote another poem on the death of the duke of Gloucester.

In 1710 he became fellow of the college; and next year, entering into orders, was presented by the society with a living in Warwickshire, consistent with his fellowship, and chosen lecturer of moral philosophy, a very honourable office.

On the accession of queen Anne he wrote another poem; and is said, by the author of the *Biographia*, to have declared himself of the party who had the honourable distinction of High-churchmen.

In

In 1706 he was received into the family of the duke of Beaufort. Next year he became doctor in divinity, and soon after resigned his fellowship and lecture; and, as a token of his gratitude, gave the college a picture of their founder.

He was made rector of *Chalton* and *Cleanville*, two adjoining towns and benefices in Hertfordshire; and had the prebends, or sinecures, of *Deans*, *Hains*, and *Pendles* in Devonshire. He had before been chosen, in 1698, preacher of Bridewell Hospital, upon the resignation of Dr. Atterbury.

From this time he seems to have led a quiet and inoffensive life, till the clamour was raised about Atterbury's plot.

Every

Every loyal eye was on the watch for abettors or partakers of the horrid conspiracy; and Dr. Yalden having some acquaintance with the bishop, and being familiarly conversant with Kelly his secretary, fell under suspicion, and was taken into custody.

Upon his examination he was charged with a dangerous correspondence with Kelly. The correspondence he acknowledged; but maintained, that it had no treasonable tendency. His papers were seized; but nothing was found that could fix a crime upon him, except two words in his pocket-book, *thorough-paced doctrine*. This expression the imagination of his examiners had impregnated with treason, and the doctor was

en-

8 Y A L D E N.

enjoined to explain them. Thus pressed, he told them that the words had lain unheeded in his pocket-book from the time of queen Anne, and that he was ashamed to give an account of them; but the truth was, that he had gratified his curiosity one day, by hearing *Daniel Burges's* in the pulpit, and those words was a memorial hint of a remarkable sentence by which he warned his congregation to *beware of thorough-paced doctrine, that doctrine, which, coming in at one ear, paces through the head, and goes out at the other.*

Nothing worse than this appearing in his papers, and no evidence arising against him, he was set at liberty.

It

It will not be supposed that a man of this character attained high dignities in the church; but he still retained the friendship, and frequented the conversation, of a very numerous and splendid body of acquaintance. He died July 16, 1736, in the 66th year of his age.

Of his poems, many are of that irregular kind, which, when he formed his poetical character, was supposed to be Pindarick. Having fixed his attention on Cowley as a model, he has attempted in some sort to rival him, and has written a *Hymn to Darkneſs*, evidently as a counter-part to Cowley's *Hymn to Light*.

This hymn seems to be his best performance, and is, for the most part, imagined with great vigour, and expressed with great propriety. I will not transcribe it. The seven first stanzas are good; but the third, fourth, and seventh are the best: the eighth seems to involve a contradiction; the tenth is exquisitely beautiful; the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth, are partly mythological, and partly religious, and therefore not suitable to each other: he might better have made the whole merely philosophical.

There are two stanzas in this poem where Yalden may be suspected, though hardly convicted, of having consulted the *Hymnus ad Umbram* of Wowerus, in
the

the sixth stanza, which answers in some sort to these lines :

*Illa suo præest nocturnis numine sacris—
Perque vias errare novis dat spectra figuris,
Manesque excitos medios ululare per agros
Sub noctem, & questu notos complere penates.*

And again, at the conclusion ;

*Illa suo senium fecundit corpore toto
Haud numerans jugi fugientia secula lapsu,
Ergo ubi postremum mundi compage solutâ
Hanc rerum molem suprema absumpserit hora
Ipsa leves cineres nube amplectetur opacâ,
Ea præsens imperio rursus dominabitur UMBRA.*

His *Hymn to Light* is not equal to the other. He seems to think that there is an East absolute and positive where the Morning rises.

In

12 V A L D E N

In the last stanza, having mentioned the sudden eruption of new created Light, he says,

Awhile th' Almighty wondering stood.

He ought to have remembered that Infinite Knowledge can never wonder. All wonder is the effect of novelty upon ignorance.

Of his other poems it is sufficient to say that they deserve perusal, though they are not always exactly polished, and the rhymes are sometimes very ill sorted, and though his faults seem rather the omissions of idleness than the negligences of enthusiasm.



O T W A Y.

OF THOMAS OTWAY, one of the first names in the English drama, little is known; nor is there any part of that little which his biographer can take pleasure in relating.

He was born at Trotton in Suffex, March 3, 1651, the son of Mr. Humphry Otway, rector of *Woolbeding*. From Winchester-school, where he was educated, he was entered in 1669 a com-

moner of Christ-church ; but left the university without a degree, whether for want of money, or from impatience of academical restraint, or mere eagerness to mingle with the world, is not known.

It seems likely that he was in hope of being busy and conspicuous ; for he went to London, and commenced player ; but found himself unable to gain any reputation on the stage.

This kind of inability he shared with Shakespeare and Jonson, as he shared likewise some of their excellencies. It seems reasonable to expect that a great dramatick poet should without difficulty become a great actor ; that he who can feel, could express ; that he who can excite passion,

sion, should exhibit with great readiness its external modes : but since experience has fully proved that of those powers, whatever be their affinity, one may be possessed in a great degree by him who has very little of the other ; it must be allowed that they depend upon different faculties, or on different use of the same faculty ; that the actor must have a pliancy of mien, a flexibility of countenance ; and a variety of tones, which the poet may be easily supposed to want ; or that the attention of the poet and the player have been differently employed ; the one has been considering thought, and the other action ; one has watched the heart, and the other contemplated the face.

4 O T W A Y.

Though he could not gain much notice as a player, he felt in himself such powers as might qualify for a dramatick author; and in 1675, his twenty-fifth year, produced *Alcibiades*, a tragedy; whether from the *Alcibiade* of *Palaprit*, I have not means to enquire. Langbain, the great detector of plagiarism, is silent.

In 1677 he published *Titus and Berenice*, translated from Rapin, with the *Cheats of Scapin* from Moliere; and in 1678 *Friendship in Fashion*, a comedy, which, whatever might be its first reception, was, upon its revival at Drury-lane in 1749, hissed off the stage for immorality and obscenity.

Want

Want of morals, or of decency, did not in those days exclude any man from the company of the wealthy and the gay, if he brought with him any powers of entertainment; and Otway is said to have been at this time a favourite companion of the dissolute wits. But, as he who desires no virtue in his companion has no virtue in himself, those whom Otway frequented had no purpose of doing more for him than to pay his reckoning. They desired only to drink and laugh; their fondness was without benevolence, and their familiarity without friendship. Men of wit, says one of Otway's biographers, received at that time no favour from the great but to share their riots; *from which they were*

6 O T W A Y.

dismissed again to their own narrow circumstances. Thus they languished in poverty without the support of imminence.

Some exception, however, must be made. The earl of Plymouth, one of king Charles's natural sons, procured for him a cornet's commission in some troops then sent into Flanders. But Otway did not prosper in his military character; for he soon left his commission behind him, whatever was the reason, and came back to London in extreme indigence; which Rochester mentions with merciless insolence in the *Session of the Poets* :

Tom Otway came next, Tom Shadwell's

dear zany,

And swears for heroicks he writes best
of any ;

Don

Don Carlos his pockets so amply had
fill'd,

That his mange was quite cured, and his
lice were all kill'd.

But Apollo had seen his face on the
stage,

And prudently did not think fit to en-
gage

The scum of a play-house, for the prop
of an age.

Don Carlos, from which he is represented as having received so much benefit, was played in 1675. It appears, by the Lampoon, to have had great success, and is said to have been played thirty nights together. This however it is reasonable to doubt, as so long a continuance of one play upon the

stage is a very wide deviation from the practice of that time; when the ardour for theatrical entertainments was not yet diffused through the whole people, and the audience, consisting nearly of the same persons, could be drawn together only by variety.

The *Orphan* was exhibited in 1680. This is one of the few plays that keep possession of the stage, and has pleased for almost a century, through all the vicissitudes of dramattick fashion. Of this play nothing new can easily be said. It is a domestick tragedy drawn from middle life. Its whole power is upon the affections; for it is not written with much comprehension of thought, or elegance of expression. But if the heart is
in-

interested, many other beauties may be wanting, yet not be missed.

The same year produced *The History and Fall of Catus Marinus*; much of which is borrowed from the *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakespeare.

In 1683 was published the first and next year the second parts of *The Soldier's Fortune*, two comedies now forgotten; and in 1685 his last and greatest dramatick work, *Venice preserved*, a tragedy, which still continues to be one of the favourites of the publick, notwithstanding the want of morality in the original design, and the despicable scenes of vile comedy with which he has diversified his tragick action. By comparing this with his *Orphan*, it will appear

appear that his images were by time become stronger, and his language more energetick. The striking passages are in every mouth; and the publick seems to judge rightly of the faults and excellencies of this play, that it is the work of a man not attentive to decency, nor zealous for virtue; but of one who conceived forcibly, and drew originally, by consulting nature in his own breast.

Together with those plays he wrote the poems which are in this collection, and translated from the French the *History of the Triumvirate*.

All this was performed before he was thirty-four years old; for he died April 14, 1685, in a manner which I am unwilling to mention. Having been compelled

pelled by his necessities to contract debts, and hunted, as is supposed, by the terriers of the law, he retired to a publick house on Tower-hill, where he died of want, or, as it is related by one of his biographers, by swallowing, after a long fast, a piece of bread which charity had supplied. He went out, as is reported, almost naked, in the rage of hunger, and finding a gentleman in a neighbouring coffee-house, asked him for a shilling. The gentleman gave him a guinea; and Otway going away bought a roll, and was choaked with the first mouthful. All this, I hope, is not true; but that indigence, and its concomitants, sorrow and despondency, brought him to the grave has never been denied.

Of

Of the poems which this collection admits, the longest is the *Poet's Complaint of his Muse*, part of which I do not understand; and in that which is less obscure I find little to commend. The language is often gross, and the numbers are harsh. Otway had not much cultivated versification, nor much replenished his mind with general knowledge. His principal power was in moving the passions, to which Dryden in his latter years left an illustrious testimony. He appears, by some of his verses, to have been a zealous royalist: and had what was in those times the common reward of loyalty; he lived and died neglected.



D U K E.

OF Mr. RICHARD DUKE
I can find few memorials. He
was bred at Westminster and Cam-
bridge; and Jacob relates, that he was
some time tutor to the duke of Rich-
mond.

He appears from his writings to have
been not ill qualified for poetical
compositions; and being conscious of
his

his powers, when he left the university he enlisted himself among the wits. He was the familiar friend of Otway; and was engaged, among other popular names, in the translations of Ovid and Juvenal. In his *Review*, though unfinished, are some vigorous lines. His poems are not below mediocrity; nor have I found much in them to be praised.

With the wit he seems to have shared the dissoluteness of the times; for some of his compositions are such as he must have reviewed with detestation in his later days, when he published those Sermons which *Felton* has commended.

Perhaps, like some other foolish young men, he rather talked than
lived

lived viciously, in an age when he that would be thought a wit was afraid to say his prayers; and whatever might have been the first part of his life, it was surely condemned and reformed by his better judgement.

In 1683, being then master of arts, and fellow of Trinity College in Cambridge, he wrote a poem on the marriage of the Lady Anne with George Prince of Denmark.

He took orders; and being made prebendary of Gloucester, became a proctor in convocation for that church, and chaplain to Queen Anne.

In 1710, he was presented by the bishop of Winchester to the wealthy living of Witney in Oxfordshire, which
he

4

D U K E

he enjoyed but a few months. On February 10, 1710-11, having returned from an entertainment, he was found dead the next morning. His death is mentioned in Swift's Journal.



D O R S E T.

OF the Earl of Dorset the character has been drawn so largely and so elegantly by Prior, to whom he was familiarly known, that nothing can be added by a casual hand; and, as it will appear in the subsequent volumes of this collection, it would be useless officiousness to transcribe it.

Charles Sackville was Born January 24, 1637. Having been educated under a private tutor, he travelled into
 b Italy,

Italy, and returned a little before the Restoration. He was chosen into the first parliament that was called, for East Grinstead in Suffex, and soon became a favourite of Charles the Second; but undertook no publick employment, being too eager of the riotous and licentious pleasures which young men of high rank, who aspired to be thought wits, at that time imagined themselves intitled to indulge.

One of these frolicks has, by the industry of Wood, come down to posterity. Sackville, who was then Lord Buckhurst, with Sir Charles Sedley and Sir Thomas Ogle, got drunk at the Cock in Bow-street by Covent-garden, and, going into the balcony, exposed themselves

selves to the populace in very indecent postures. At last, as they grew warmer, Sedley stood forth naked, and harangued the populace in such profane language, that the publick indignation was awakened; the crowd attempted to force the door, and being repulsed, drove in the performers with stones, and broke the windows of the house.

For this misdemeanour they were indicted, and Sedley was fined five hundred pounds: what was the sentence of the others is not known. Sedley employed Killigrew and another to procure a remission from the king; but, mark the friendship of the dissolute, they begged the fine for themselves, and exacted it to the last groat.

4. D O R S E T.

In 1665, lord Buckhurst attended the duke of York as a volunteer in the Dutch war; and was in the battle of June 3, when eighteen great Dutch ships were taken, and fourteen others destroyed; and Opdam the admiral, who engaged the duke, was blown up beside him, with all his crew.

On the day before the battle, he is said to have composed the celebrated song, *To all you Ladies now at land*, with equal tranquillity of mind and promptitude of wit. Seldom any splendid story is wholly true. I have heard from the late earl of Orrery, who was likely to have good hereditary intelligence, that lord Buckhurst had been a week employed upon it, and only retouched or
2 finished

finished it on the memorable evening. But even this, whatever it may substract from his facility, leaves him his courage.

He was soon after made a gentleman of the bedchamber, and sent on short embassies to France.

In 1674, the estate of his uncle James Cranfield, earl of Middlesex, came to him by its owner's death, and the title was conferred on him the year after. In 1677, he became, by the death of his father, earl of Dorset, and inherited the estate of his family.

In 1684, having buried his first wife, of the family of Bagot, who left him no child, he married a daughter of

6 D O R S E T.

the earl of Northampton, celebrated both for beauty and understanding.

He received some favourable notice from king James; but soon found it necessary to oppose the violence of his innovations, and with some other lords appeared in Westminster-hall to countenance the bishops at their trial.

As enormities grew every day less supportable, he found it necessary to concur in the Revolution. He was one of those lords who sat every day in council to preserve the publick peace, after the king's departure; and, what is not the most illustrious action of his life, was employed to conduct the princess Anne to Nottingham with a guard, such as might alarm the populace, as they
3. passed,

passed, with false apprehensions of her danger. Whatever end may be designed, there is always something despicable in a trick.

He became, as may be easily supposed, a favourite of king William, who, the day after his accession, made him lord chamberlain of the household, and gave him afterwards the garter. He happened to be among those that were tossed with the king in an open boat sixteen hours, in very rough and cold weather, on the coast of Holland. His health afterwards declined; and on Jan. 19, 1705-6, he died at Bath.

He was a man whose elegance and judgement were universally confessed, and whose bounty to the learned and

8 D O R S E T.

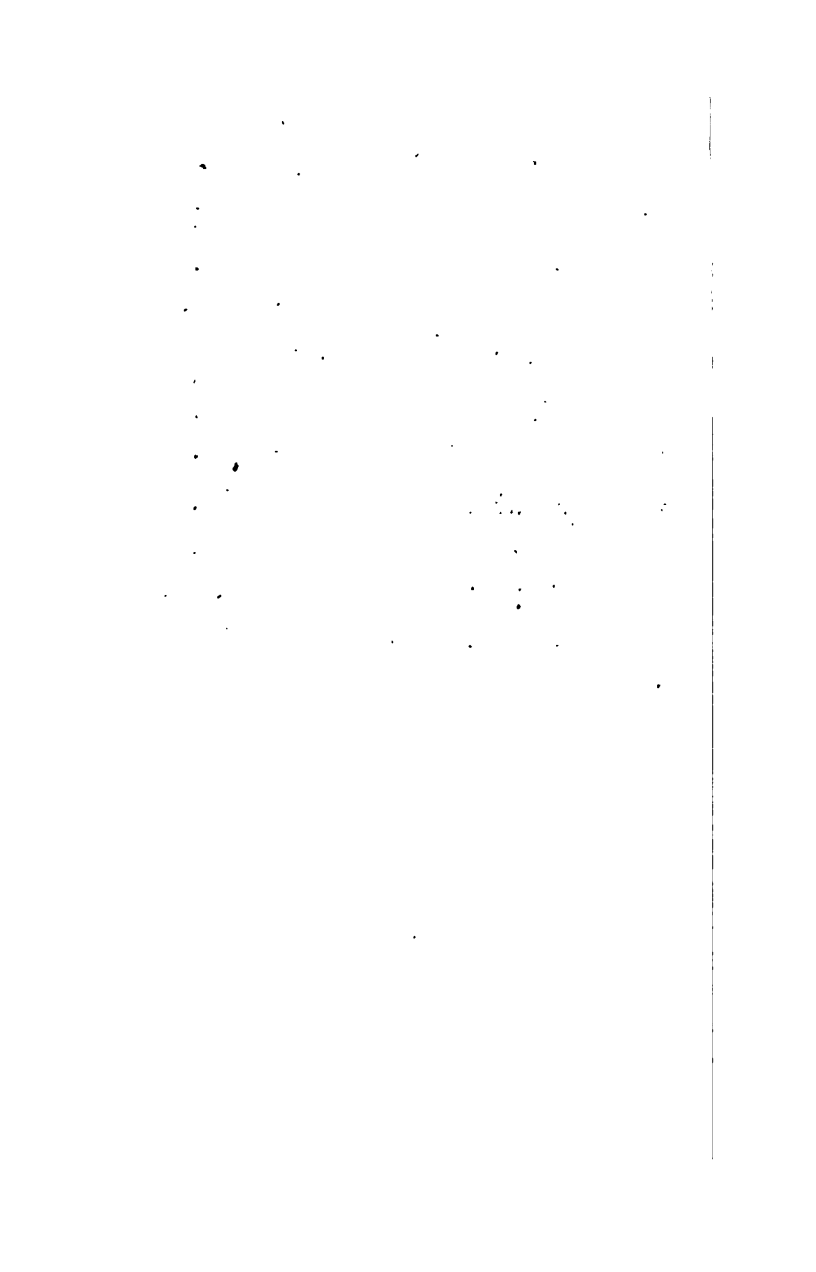
witty was generally known. To the indulgent affection of the publick, lord Rochester bore ample testimony in this remark: *I know not how it is, but lord Buckhurst may do what he will, yet is never in the wrong.*

If such a man attempted poetry, we cannot wonder that his works were praised. Dryden, whom, if Prior tells truth, he distinguished by his beneficence, and who lavished his blandishments on those who are not known to have so well deserved them, undertaking to produce authors of our own country superior to those of antiquity, *says, I would instance your lordship in satire, and Shakespeare in tragedy.* Would it be imagined that, of this rival to antiquity,

tiquity, all the satires were little personal
 invectives; and that his longest compo-
 sition was a song of eleven stanzas?

The blame, however, of this exag-
 gerated praise falls on the encomiast,
 not upon the author; whose perfor-
 mances are, what they pretend to be,
 the effusions of a man of wit; gay,
 vigorous, and airy. His verses to
 Howard shew great fertility of mind,
 and his *Dorinda* has been imitated by
 Pope.





HALIFAX.

THE life of the earl of Halifax was properly that of an artful and active statesman, employed in balancing parties, contriving expedients, and combating opposition, and exposed to the vicissitudes of advancement and degradation : but in this collection poetical merit is the claim to attention ; and the account which is here to be expected may properly be proportioned not to his influence in the state, but to his rank among the writers of verse.

Charles.

2 H A L I F A X.

Charles Montague was born April 16, 1661, at Horton in Northamptonshire, the son of Mr. George Montague, a younger son of the earl of Manchester. He was educated first in the country, and then removed to Westminster; where in 1677 he was chosen a king's scholar, and recommended himself to Busby by his felicity in extemporary epigrams. He contracted a very intimate friendship with Mr. Stepney; and in 1682, when Stepney was elected to Cambridge, the election of Montague being not to proceed till the year following, he was afraid lest by being placed at Oxford he might be separated from his companion, and therefore solicited to be removed

moved to Cambridge, without waiting for the advantages of another year.

It seems indeed time to wish for a removal; for he was already a school-boy of one and twenty.

His relation Dr. Montague was then master of the college in which he was placed a fellow-commoner, and took him under his particular care. Here he commenced an acquaintance with the great Newton, which continued through his life, and was at last attested by a legacy.

In 1685, his verses on the death of king Charles made such impression on the earl of Dorset, that he was invited to town, and introduced by that universal patron to the other wits. In 1687, he

4 H A L I F A X.

he joined with Prior in the *City Mouse and Country Mouse*, a burlesque of Dryden's *Hind and Panther*. He signed the invitation to the Prince of Orange, and sat in the convention. He about the same time married the countess dowager of Manchester, and intended to have taken orders; but afterwards altering this purpose, he purchased for 1500*l.* the place of one of the clerks of the council.

After he had written his epistle on the victory of the *Boyne*, his patron Dorset introduced him to king William with this expression: *Sir, I have brought a Mouse to wait on your Majesty.* To which the king is said to have replied, *You do well to put me in the way of making*
a Man

a Man of *bim*; and ordered him a pension of five hundred pounds. This story, however current, seems to have been made after the event. The king's answer implies a greater acquaintance with our proverbial and familiar diction than king William could possibly have attained.

In 1691, being member in the house of commons, he argued warmly in favour of a law to grant the assistance of counsel in trials for high treason; and in the midst of his speech falling into some confusion was for a while silent; but, recovering himself, observed, "how reasonable it was to allow counsel to men called as criminals before a court of justice, when it appeared how
 " much

6 H A L I F A X.

“ much the prefence of that affembly
“ could difconcert one of their own body.”

After this he rofe faft into honours and employments, being made one of the commiffioners of the treasury, and called to the privy council. In 1694, he became chancellor of the Exchequer; and the next year engaged in the great attempt of the recoinage, which was in two years happily completed. In 1696, he projected the *general fund*, and raifed the credit of the Exchequer; and, after enquiry concerning a grant of Irish crown-lands, it was determined by a vote of the commons, that Charles Montague efquire *had deferved his Majefty's favour*. In 1698, being advanced to the firft commiffion of the treasury, he was

H A L I F A X. 7

appointed one of the regency in the king's absence : the next year he was made auditor of the Exchequer ; and the year after created *baron Halifax*. He was however impeached by the commons ; but the articles were dismissed by the lords.

At the accession of queen Anne he was dismissed from the council ; and in the first parliament of her reign was again attacked by the commons, and again escaped by the protection of the lords. In 1704, he wrote an answer to Bromley's speech against occasional conformity. He headed the Enquiry into the danger of the Church. In 1706, he proposed and negotiated the Union with Scotland ; and when the elector of Ha-

8 H A L I F A X.

never received the garter, after the act had passed for securing the Protestant Succession, he was appointed to carry the ensigns of the order to the electoral court. He sat as one of the judges of Sacheverell; but voted for a mild sentence. Being now no longer in favour, he contrived to obtain a writ for summoning the electoral prince to parliament as duke of Cambridge.

At the queen's death he was appointed one of the regents; and at the accession of George the First was made earl of Halifax, knight of the garter, and first commissioner of the treasury, with a grant to his nephew of the reversion of the auditorship of the Exchequer. More was not to be had, and this he kept

kept but a little while; for on the 19th of May, 1715, he died of an inflammation of his lungs.

Of him, who from a poet became a patron of poets, it will be readily believed that the works would not miss of celebration. Addison began to praise him early, and was followed or accompanied by other poets; perhaps by almost all, except Swift and Pope; who forbore to flatter him in his life, and after his death spoke of him, Swift with slight censure, and Pope in the character of Bufo with acrimonious contempt.

He was, as Pope says, *fed with dedications*; for Tickell affirms that no dedicatory was unrewarded. To charge

TO H A L I F A X.

all unmerited praise with the guilt of flattery, and to suppose that the encomiast always knows and feels the falsehood of his assertions, is surely to discover great ignorance of human nature and human life. In determinations depending not on rules, but on experience and comparison, judgement is always in some degree subject to affection. Very near to admiration is the wish to admire.

Every man willingly gives value to the praise which he receives, and considers the sentence passed in his favour as the sentence of discernment. We admire in a friend that understanding that selected us for confidence; we admire more, in a patron, that judgement which,

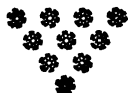
instead of scattering bounty indiscriminately, directed it to us; and those performances which gratitude forbids us to blame, affection will easily dispose us to exalt.

To these prejudices, hardly culpable, interest adds a power always operating, though not always, because not willingly, perceived. The modesty of praise wears gradually away; and perhaps the pride of patronage may be in time so increased, that modest praise will no longer please.

Many a blandishment was practised upon Halifax, which he would never have known, had he had no other attractions than those of his poetry, of which a short time has withered the beauties. It

12 H A L I F A X.

would now be esteemed no honour, by a contributor to the monthly bundles of verses, to be told, that, in strains either familiar or solemn, he sings like Montague.



S T E P N E Y.

GEORGE STEPNEY, descended from the Stepneys of Pendegraft in Pembrokeſhire, was born at Weſtminſter in 1663. Of his father's condition or fortune I have no account. Having received the firſt part of his education at Weſtminſter, he went to Cambridge, where he continued a friendſhip begun at ſchool with Mr. Montague, afterwards earl of Halifax. They came to London together, and are ſaid to have
been

2 S T E P N E Y.

been invited into publick life by the duke of Dorset.

His qualifications recommended him to many foreign employments, so that his time seems to have been spent in negotiations. In 1692 he was sent envoy to the elector of Brandenburg; in 1693 to the Imperial Court; in 1694 to the elector of Saxony; in 1696 to the electors of Mentz and Cologne, and the congress at Francfort; in 1698 a second time to Brandenburg; in 1699 to the king of Poland; in 1701 again to the Emperor; and in 1706 to the States General. In 1697 he was made one of the commissioners of trade. His life was busy, and not long. He died in 1707; and is buried in Westminster-



S T E P N E Y. 3

minster-abbey with this epitaph, which
Jacob transcribed.

H. S. E.

GEORGIUS STEPNEIUS, Armiger,

Vir

Ob Ingenii acumen,

Literarum Scientiam,

Morum Suavitatem,

Rerum Usum,

Virorum Amplissimorum Consuetudinem,

Linguae Styli ac Vitae Elegantiam,

Præclara Officia cum Britanniae tum Europæ

præstita,

Suæ ætate multum celebratus,

Apud posteros semper celebrandus ;

Plurimas Legationes obiit

Ea Fide, Diligentia, ac Felicitate,

Ut Augustissimorum Principum

Gulielmi & Annæ

Spens

4 S T E P N E Y.

Spem in illo repositam

Nunquam fefellerit,

Haud raro superavit.

Post longum honorum Cursum

Brevi Temporis Spatio confectum,

Cum Naturæ parvæ Fama satis vixerat,

Animam ad altiora aspirantem placide efflavit.

On the Left Hand :

G. S.

Ex Equestri Familia Stepneiorum,

De Pendegrast, in Comitatu

Pembrochienti oriundus,

Westmonasterii natus est, A. D. 1663.

Electus in Collegium

Sancti Petri Westmonast. A. 1676.

Sancti Trinitatis Cantab. 1682.

Confiliariorum quibus Commercii

Cura commissa est 1697.

Chel.

S T E P N E Y. 5

Chelseiæ mortuus, & comitante

Magna Procerum

Frequentia huc elatus, 1707.

It is reported that the juvenile compositions of Stepney *made grey authors blush*. I know not whether his poems will appear such wonders to the present age. One cannot always easily find the reason for which the world has sometimes conspired to squander praise. It is not very unlikely that he wrote very early as well as he ever wrote; and the performances of youth have many favourers, because the authors yet lay no claim to publick honours, and are therefore not considered as rivals by the distributors of fame.

He

6 S T E P N E Y.

He apparently professed himself a poet, and added his name to those of the other wits in the version of Juvenal; but he is a very licentious translator, and does not recompense his neglect of the author by beauties of his own. In his original poems, now and then, a happy line may perhaps be found, and now and then a short composition may give pleasure. But there is in the whole little either of the grace of wit, or the vigour of nature.



W A L S H.

WILLIAM WALSH, the son of Joseph Walsh, Esq; of Abberley in Worcestershire, was born in 1663, as appears from the account of Wood; who relates, that at the age of fifteen he became, in 1678, a gentleman commoner of Wadham college.

He left the university without a degree, and pursued his studies in London and at home; that he studied, in whatever place, is apparent from the effect;
for

for he became, in Mr. Dryden's opinion,
the best critick in the nation.

He was not, however, merely a critick or a scholar. He was likewise a member of parliament and a courtier, knight of the shire for his native county in several parliaments; in another the representative of Richmond in Yorkshire, and gentleman of the horse to Queen Anne under the duke of Somerset.

Some of his verses shew him to have been a zealous friend to the Revolution; but his political ardour did not abate his reverence or kindness for Dryden, to whom he gave a Dissertation on Virgil's Pastorals, in which, however studied, he discovers some ignorance of the laws of French versification.

In

In 1705, he began to correspond with Mr. Pope, in whom he discovered very early the power of poetry. Their letters are written upon the pastoral comedy of the Italians, and those pastorals which Pope was then preparing to publish.

The kindnesses which are first experienced are seldom forgotten. Pope always retained a grateful memory of Walsh's notice, and mentioned him in one of his latter pieces among those that had encouraged his juvenile studies:

——Granville the polite,
And knowing Walsh, would tell me I
could write.

In his Essay on Criticism he had given him more splendid praise, and, in the
opi-

4 W A L S H.

opinion of his learned commentator, sacrificed a little of his judgement to his gratitude.

The time of his death I have not learned. It must have happened between 1707, when he wrote to Pope, and 1711, when Pope praised him in the Essay. The epitaph makes him forty-six years old: if Wood's account be right, he died in 1709.

He is known more by his familiarity with greater men, than by any thing done or written by himself.

His works are not numerous. In prose he wrote *Eugenia, a defence of women*; which Dryden honoured with a Preface.

Esculapius, or the Hospital of Fools, published after his death.

A Col-

A Collection of Letters and Poems, amorous and gallant, was published in the volumes called Dryden's Miscellany, and some other occasional pieces.

To his Poems and Letters is prefixed a very judicious preface upon Epistolary Composition and Amorous Poetry.

In his *Golden Age restored*, there was something of humour, when the facts were recent; but it now strikes no longer. In his imitation of Horace, the first stanzas are happily turned; and in all his writings there are pleasing passages. He has however more elegance than vigour, and seldom rises higher than to be pretty.



G A R T H.

SAMUEL GARTH was of a good family in Yorkshire, and from some school in his own country became a student at Peter-house in Cambridge, where he resided till he commenced doctor of physick on July the 7th, 1691. He was examined before the College at London on March the 12th, 1691-2, and admitted fellow July 26th, 1692. He was soon so much distinguished, by his conversation and accomplishments, as to obtain very extensive practice;
b and,

and, if a pamphlet of those times may be credited, had the favour and confidence of one party, as Ratcliffe had of the other.

He is always mentioned as a man of benevolence; and it is just to suppose that his desire of helping the helpless, disposed him to so much zeal for the *Dispensary*; an undertaking of which some account, however short, is proper to be given.

Whether what Temple says be true, that physicians have had more learning than the other faculties, I will not stay to enquire; but, I believe, every man has found in physicians great liberality, and dignity of sentiment, very prompt effusion of beneficence, and willingness
to

to exert a lucrative art, where there is no hope of lucre. Agreeably to this character, the College of Physicians, in July 1687, published an edict, requiring all the fellows, candidates, and licentiates, to give gratuitous advice to the neighbouring poor.

This edict was sent to the Court of Aldermen; and a question being made to whom the appellation of the *poor* should be extended, the College answered, that it should be sufficient to bring a testimonial from a clergyman officiating in the parish where the patient resided.

After a year's experience, the physicians found their charity frustrated by some malignant opposition, and made

to a great degree vain by the high price of phyfick; they therefore voted, in August 1688, that the laboratory of the College should be accommodated to the preparation of medicines, and another room prepared for their reception; and that the contributors to the expence should manage the charity.

It was now expected that the Apothecaries would have undertaken the care of providing medicines; but they took another course. Thinking the whole design pernicious to their interest, they endeavoured to raise a faction against it in the College, and found some physicians mean enough to solicit their patronage, by betraying to
them

them the counsels of the College. The greater part, however, enforced by a new edict in 1694, the former order of 1687, and sent it to the mayor and aldermen, who appointed a committee to treat with the College, and settle the mode of administering the Charity.

It was desired by the aldermen, that the testimonials of churchwardens and overseers should be admitted; and that all hired servants, and all apprentices to handicraftsmen, should be considered as *poor*. This likewise was granted by the College.

It was then considered who should distribute the medicines, and who should settle their prices. The physicians pro-

cured some apothecaries to undertake the dispensation, and offered that the warden and company of the apothecaries should adjust the price. This offer was rejected; and the apothecaries who had engaged to assist the charity were considered as traitors to the company, threatened with the imposition of troublesome offices, and deterred from the performance of their engagements. The apothecaries ventured upon publick opposition, and presented a kind of remonstrance against the design to the committee of the city, which the physicians condescended to confute: and at last the traders seem to have prevailed among the sons of trade; for the proposal of the college having

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been

been considered, a paper of approbation was drawn up, but postponed and forgotten.

The physicians still persisted; and in 1696 a subscription was raised by themselves, according to an agreement prefixed to the Dispensary. The poor were for a time supplied with medicines; for how long a time, I know not. The medicinal charity, like others, began with ardour, but soon remitted, and at last died gradually away.

About the time of the subscription begins the action of the *Dispensary*. The poem, as its subject was present and popular, co-operated with passions and prejudices then prevalent;

and with such auxiliaries to its intrinsic merit, was universally and liberally applauded. It was on the side of charity against the intrigues of interest, and of regular learning against licentious usurpation of medical authority, and was therefore naturally favoured by those who read and can judge of poetry.

In 1697, Garth spoke that which is now called the *Harveian Oration*; which the authors of the *Biographia* mention with more praise than the passage quoted in their notes will fully justify. Garth, speaking of the mischiefs done by quacks, has these expressions :
 “ Non tamē telis vulnerat ista agyrtarum colluvies, sed theriacâ quadam.
 “ magis

“magis pernicioſa, non pyrio, ſed pul-
 “vere neſcio quo exotico certat, non
 “globulis plumbeis, ſed pilulis æque
 “lethalibus interficit.” This was cer-
 tainly thought fine by the author, and
 is ſtill admired by his biographer. In
 October 1702 he became one of the
 cenſors of the College.

Garth, being an active and zealous
 Whig, was a member of the Kit-cat
 club, and by conſequence familiarly
 known to all the great men of that de-
 nomination. In 1710, when the go-
 vernment fell into other hands, he writ
 to lord Godolphin, on his diſmiſſion, a
 ſhort poem, which was criticiſed in the
Examiner, and ſo ſucceſsfully either de-
 fended or excuſed by Mr. Addiſon, that,

for the sake of the vindication, it ought to be preserved.

At the accession of the present Family his merits were acknowledged and rewarded. He was knighted with the sword of his hero, Marlborough; and was made physician in ordinary to the king, and physician-general to the army.

He then undertook an edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, translated by several hands; which he recommended by a Preface, written with more ostentation than ability: his notions are half-formed, and his materials immethodically confused. This was his last work. He died Jan. 18, 1717-18, and was buried at Harrow-on-the-Hill.

His

His personal character seems to have been social and liberal. He communicated himself through a very wide extent of acquaintance; and though firm in a party, at a time when firmness included virulence, yet he imparted his kindness to those who were not supposed to favour his principles. He was an early encourager of Pope, and was at once the friend of Addison and of Granville. He is accused of voluptuousness and irreligion; and Pope, who says that "if ever there was a good Christian, without knowing himself to be so, it was Dr. Garth," seems not able to deny what he is angry to hear and loth to confess.

His

His poetry has been praised at least equally to its merit. In the *Dispensary* there is a strain of smooth and free versification; but few lines are eminently elegant. No passages fall below mediocrity, and few rise much above it. The plan seems formed without just proportion to the subject; the means and end have no necessary connection. *Resnel*, in his Preface to *Pope's Essay*, remarks, that Garth exhibits no discrimination of characters; and that what any one says might with equal propriety have been said by another. The general design is perhaps open to criticism; but the composition can seldom be charged with inaccuracy or negligence. The author never flumbers in self-indulgence;

indulgence; his full vigour is always exerted; scarce a line is left unfinished, nor is it easy to find an expression used by constraint, or a thought imperfectly expressed. It was remarked by Pope, that the *Dispensary* had been corrected in every edition, and that every change was an improvement. It appears, however, to want something of poetical ardour, and something of general delectation; and therefore, since it has been no longer supported by accidental and extrinsic popularity, it has been scarcely able to support itself.



K I N G.

WILLIAM KING was born in London in 1663 the son of Ezekiel King, a gentleman. He was allied to the family of Clarendon.

From Westminster-school, where he was a scholar on the foundation under the care of Dr. Busby, he was at eighteen elected to Christ-church, in 1681; where he is said to have prosecuted his studies with so much intenseness and activity, that, before he was eight years standing, he had read over, and made

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remarks

remarks upon, twenty-two thousand odd hundred books and manuscripts. The books were certainly not very long, the manuscripts not very difficult, nor the remarks very large; for the calculator will find that he dispatched seven a-day, for every day of his eight years, with a remnant that more than satisfies most other students. He took his degree in the most expensive manner, as a *grand compounder*; whence it is inferred that he inherited a considerable fortune.

In 1688, the same year in which he was made master of arts, he published a confutation of Varillas's account of Wicliffe; and, engaging in the study of the Civil Law, became doctor in
1692,

1692, and was admitted advocate at Doctors Commons.

He had already made some translations from the French, and written some humorous and satirical pieces; when, in 1694, Molesworth published his *Account of Denmark*, in which he treats the Danes and their monarch with great contempt; and takes the opportunity of insinuating those wild principles, by which he supposes liberty to be established, and his adversaries suspect that all subordination and government is endangered.

This book offended prince George; and the Danish minister presented a memorial against it. The principles of its author did not please Dr. King, and

therefore he undertook to confute part, and laugh at the rest. The controversy is now forgotten; and books of this kind seldom live long, when interest and resentment have ceased.

In 1697 he mingled in the controversy between Boyle and Bentley; and was one of those who tried what Wit could perform in opposition to Learning.

In 1699 was published by him a *Journey to London*, after the method of Dr. Martin Lister. And in 1700 he satirised the Royal Society, at least Sir Hans Sloane their president, in two dialogues, intituled *The Transactioneer*.

Though he was a regular advocate in the courts of civil and canon law,

he did not love his profession, nor indeed any kind of business which interrupted his voluptuary dreams, or forced him to rouse from that indulgence in which only he could find delight. His reputation as a civilian was yet maintained by his judgements in the courts of Delegates, and raised very high by the address and knowledge which he discovered in 1700, when he defended the earl of Anglesea against his lady, afterwards dutchess of Buckinghamshire, who sued for a divorce, and obtained it.

The expence of his pleasures, and neglect of business, had now lessened his revenues; and he was willing to accept of a settlement in Ireland, where,

about 1702, he was made judge of the admiralty, commissioner of the prizes, keeper of the records in Birmingham's tower, and vicar-general to Dr. Marth the primate.

But it is vain to put wealth within the reach of him who will not stretch out his hand to take it. King soon found a friend as idle and thoughtless as himself, in *Upton*, one of the judges, who had a pleasant house called Mount-town, near Dublin, to which King frequently retired; delighting to neglect his interest, forget his cares, and desert his duty.

Here he wrote *Mully of Mountown*, a poem, by which, though fanciful readers in the pride of sagacity have given it
a poli-

a political interpretation, was meant originally no more than it expressed, as it was dictated only by the author's delight in the quiet of *Mounton*.

In 1708, when lord Wharton was sent to govern Ireland, King returned to London, with his poverty, his idleness, and his wit; and published some essays called *Useful Transactions*. His *Voyage to the Island of Cajamal* is particularly commended. He then wrote the *Art of Love*, a poem remarkable, notwithstanding its title, for purity of sentiment; and in 1709 imitated Horace in an *Art of Cookery*, which he published, with some letters to Dr. Lister.

In 1710 he appeared, as a lover of the Church, on the side of Sacheverell;

and was supposed to have concurred at least in the projection of *The Examiner*. His eyes were open to all the operations of Whiggism; and he bestowed some strictures upon Dr. Kennet's adulatory sermon at the funeral of the duke of Devonshire.

The History of the Heathen Gods, a book composed for schools, was written by him in 1711. The work is useful; but might have been produced without the powers of King. The same year he published *Rufinus*, an historical essay, and a poem, intended to dispose the nation to think as he thought of the duke of Marlborough and his adherents.

In

In 1711, competence, if not plenty, was again put into his power. He was, without the trouble of attendance, or the mortification of a request, made gazetteer. Swift, Freind, Prior, and other men of the same party, brought him the key of the gazetteer's office. He was now again placed in a profitable employment, and again threw the benefit away. An Act of Insolvency made his business at that time particularly troublesome; and he would not wait till hurry should be at an end, but impatiently resigned it, and returned to his wonted indigence and amusements.

One of his amusements at Lambeth, where he resided, was to mortify Dr. Tennison, the archbishop, by a publick festi-

festivity, on the surrender of Dunkirk to Hill; an event with which Tennyson's political bigotry did not suffer him to be delighted. King was resolved to counteract his sullenness, and at the expence of a few barrels of ale filled the neighbourhood with honest merriment.

In the Autumn of 1712 his health declined; he grew weaker by degrees, and died on Christmas-day. Though his life had not been without irregularity, his principles were pure and orthodox, and his death was pious.

After this relation, it will be naturally supposed that his poems were rather the amusements of idleness than efforts of study; that he endeavoured rather to divert than astonish; that his thoughts

thoughts feldom aspired to sublimity ;
and that, if his verse was easy and his
images familiar, he attained what he
desired. His purpose is to be merry ;
though perhaps, to enjoy his mirth, it
may be sometimes necessary to think well
of his opinions.



P H I L I P S.

JOHN PHILIPS was born on the 30th of December, 1676, at Bampton in Oxfordshire; of which place his father Dr. Stephen Philips, arch-deacon of Salop, was minister. The first part of his education was domestick, after which he was sent to Winchester, where, as we are told by Dr. Sewel, his biographer, he was soon distinguished by the superiority of his exercises; and, what is less easily to be credited, so much endeared himself to his school-fellows,

2 J. P H I L I P S.

fellows, by his civility and good-nature, that they, without murmur or ill-will, saw him indulged by the master with particular immunities. It is related, that, when he was at school, he seldom mingled in play with the other boys, but retired to his chamber; where his sovereign pleasure was to sit, hour after hour, while his hair was combed by somebody, whose service he found means to procure.

At school he became acquainted with the poets ancient and modern, and fixed his attention particularly on Milton.

In 1694 he entered himself at Christchurch; a college at that time in the highest reputation, by the transmission of Busby's scholars to the care first of
Fell,

Fell, and afterwards of *Aldrich*. Here he was distinguished as a genius eminent among the eminent, and for a friendship particularly intimate with Mr. Smith, the author of *Phædra and Hippolytus*. The profession which he intended to follow was that of physick; and he took much delight in natural history, of which botany was his favourite part.

His reputation was confined to his friends and to the university; till about 1703 he extended it to a wider circle by the *Splendid Shilling*, which struck the publick attention with a mode of writing new and unexpected.

This performance raised him so high, that when Europe resounded with the

4 J. P H I L I P S.

victory of Blenheim, he was, probably with an occult opposition to Addison, employed to deliver the acclamation of the Tories. It is said that he would willingly have declined the task, but that his friends urged it upon him. It appears that he wrote this poem at the house of St. John.

Blenheim was published in 1705. The next year produced his greatest work, the poem upon *Cider*, in two books; which was received with loud praises, and continued long to be read as an imitation of Virgil's *Georgick*, which needed not shun the presence of the original.

He then grew probably more confident of his own abilities, and began to meditate a poem on the *Last Day*; a
sub-

subject on which no mind can hope to equal expectation.

This work he did not live to finish: his diseases, a slow consumption and an asthma, put a stop to his studies; and on Feb. 15, 1708, at the beginning of his thirty-third year, put an end to his life. He was buried in the cathedral of Hereford; and Sir *Simon Harcourt*, afterwards Lord Chancellor, gave him a monument in Westminster Abbey. The inscription at Westminster was written, as I have heard, by Dr. *Atterbury*, though commonly given to Dr. *Freind*:

6 J. P H I L I P S.

His Epitaph at Hereford :

J O H A N N E S P H I L I P S

Obiit 15 die Feb. Anno { Dom. 1708.
Ætat. suæ 32.

Cujus

Offa si requiras, hanc Urnam inspice,
Si Ingenium nescias, ipsius Opera confule ;

Si Tumulum desideras,

Templum adi *Westmonasteriense* :

Qualis quantusque Vir fuerit,
Dicat elegans illa & præclara,
Quæ cenotaphium ibi decorat

Inscriptio.

Quàm interim erga Cognatos pius & officiosus,

Testetur hoc saxum

A MARIA PHILIPS Matre ipsius pientissimâ,
Dilecti Filii Memoriae non sine Lacrymis dictum.

His

His Epitaph at Westminster :

Herefordiæ conduntur Ossa,
 Hoc in Delubro statuitur Imago,
 Britanniam omnem pervagatur Fama
 JOHANNIS PHILIPS :
 Qui Viris bonis doctisque juxta charus,
 Immortale suum Ingenium,
 Eruditione multiplici excultum,
 Miro animi candore,
 Eximiâ morum simplicitate,
 Honcstavit.

Litterarum Amœniorum sitim,
 Quam Wintoniæ Puer sentire cœperat,
 Inter Ædis Christi Alumnos jugiter explevit,
 In illo Musarum Domicilio
 Præclaris Æmulorum studiis excitatus,
 Optimis scribendi Magistris semper intentus,
 Carmina sermone Patrio composuit

8 J. P H I L I P S.

A Græcis Latinisque fontibus feliciter deducta,

Atticis Romanisque auribus omnino digna,

Veruum quippe Harmoniam

Rythmo didicerat.

Antiquo illo, libero, multiformi

Ad res ipsas apto prorsus, & attemperato,

Non Numeris in eundem ferè orbem redeuntibus,

Non Clausularum similiter cadentium sono

Metiri :

Uni in hoc laudis genere Miltono secundus,

Primoque pœne Par.

Res seu Tenuēs, seu Grandes, seu Mediocres

Ornandas sumserat,

Nusquam, non quod decuit,

Et videt, & affectus est,

Egregius, quosunque Stylum verteret,

Fandi author, & Modorum artifex.

Fas sit Huic,

Auso licèt à tuâ Metrorum Lege discedere

O Poësie

J. P H I L I P S. 9

O Poësis Anglicanæ Pater, atque Conditor Chaucer,

Alterum tibi latus claudere,

Vatum certe Cineres, tuos undique stipantium.

Non dedecabit Chorum.

S I M O N H A R C O U R T Miles,

Viri benè de se, de quo Litteris meriti:

Quoad viveret, Fautor,

Post Obitum piè memor,

Hoc illi Saxum poni voluit.

J. PHILIPS, STEPHANI, S. T. P. Archidiaconû

Salop, Filius, natus est Bamptoniæ

in agro Oxon. Dec. 30, 1676.

Obiit Herefordiæ, Feb. 15, 1708.

Philips

Philips has been always praised, without contradiction, as a man modest, blameless, and pious; who bore a narrow fortune without discontent, and tedious and painful maladies without impatience; beloved by those that knew him, but not ambitious to be known. He was probably not formed for a wide circle. His conversation is commended for its innocent gaiety, which seems to have flowed only among his intimates; for I have been told, that he was in company silent and barren, and employed only upon the pleasures of his pipe. His addiction to tobacco is mentioned by one of his biographers, who remarks that in all his writings, except *Blenheim*, he has found an opportunity
cele-

celebrating the fragrant fume. In common life he was probably one of those who please by not offending, and whose person was loved because his writings were admired. He died honoured and lamented, before any part of his reputation had withered, and before his patron St. John had disgraced him.

His works are few. The *Splendid Shilling* has the uncommon merit of an original design, unless it may be thought precluded by the ancient *Centos*. To degrade the sounding words and stately construction of Milton, by an application to the lowest and most trivial things, gratifies the mind with a momentary triumph over that grandeur which hitherto held its captives in admiration;

miration ; the words and things are presented with a new appearance, and novelty is always grateful where it gives no pain.

But the merit of such performances begins and ends with the first author. He that should again adapt Milton's phrase to the gross incidents of common life, and even adapt it with more art, which would not be difficult, must yet expect but a small part of the praise which Philips has obtained ; he can only hope to be considered as the repeater of a jest.

“ The parody on Milton,” says Gildon, “ is the only tolerable production of its author.” This is a censure too dogmatical and violent. The

poem of *Blenheim* was never denied to be tolerable, even by those who do not allow it supreme excellence. It is indeed the poem of a scholar, *all inexperienced of war*; of a man who writes books from books, and studies the world in a college. He seems to have formed his ideas of the field of *Blenheim* from the battles of the heroick ages, or the tales of chivalry, with very little comprehension of the qualities necessary to the composition of a modern hero, which Addison has displayed with so much propriety. He makes *Marlborough* behold at distance the slaughter made by *Tallard*, then haste to encounter and restrain him, and mow his way through ranks made headless by his sword.

He

He imitates Milton's numbers indeed, but imitates them very injudiciously. Deformity is easily copied; and whatever there is in Milton which the reader wishes away, all that is obsolete, peculiar, or licentious, is accumulated with great care by Philips. Milton's verse was harmonious, in proportion to the general state of our metre in Milton's age; and, if he had written after the improvements made by Dryden, it is reasonable to believe that he would have admitted a more pleasing modulation of numbers into his work; but Philips fits down with a resolution to make no more musick than he found; to want all that his master wanted, though he is very far from having what his master had.

had. Those asperities, therefore, that are venerable in the *Paradise Lost* are contemptible in the *Blenheim*.

There is a Latin ode written to his patron St. John, in return for a present of wine and tobacco, which cannot be passed without notice. It is gay, and elegant, and exhibits several artful accommodations of claffick expreffions to new purposes. It seems better turned than the odes of *Hannes* *.

* This ode I am willing to mention, because there seems to be an error in all the printed copies, which is, I find, retained in this. They all read ;

Quam Gratiarum cura decentium

O ! O ! labellis cui Venus infidet.

The author probably wrote,

Quam Gratiarum cura decentium

Ornat ; labellis cui Venus infidet.

To

To the poem on *Cider*, written in imitation of the *Georgicks*, may be given this peculiar praise, that it is grounded in truth ; that the precepts which it contains are exact and just ; and that it is therefore, at once, a book of entertainment and of science. This I was told by Miller, the great gardener and botanist, whose expression was, that *there were many books written on the same subject in prose, which do not contain so much truth as that poem.*

In the disposition of his matter, so as to intersperse precepts relating to the culture of trees, with sentiments more generally pleasing, and in easy and graceful transitions from one subject to another,

ther, he has very diligently imitated his master; but he unhappily pleased himself with blank verse, and supposed that the numbers of Milton, which impress the mind with veneration, combined as they are with subjects of inconceivable grandeur, could be sustained by images which at most can rise only to elegance. Contending angels may shake the regions of heaven in blank verse; but the flow of equal measures, and the embellishment of rhyme, must recommend to our attention the art of engrafting, and decide the merit of the *redstreak* and *pearmain*.

What study could confer, Philips had obtained; but natural deficiency can-

not be supplied. He seems not born to greatness and elevation. He is never lofty, nor does he often surprise with unexpected excellence; but perhaps to his last poem may be applied what Tully said of the work of Lucretius, that *it is written with much art, though with few blazes of genius.*



The

The following Fragment, written by Edmund Smith, upon the works of Philips, has been transcribed from the Bodleian manuscripts.

“ A prefatory Discourse to the Poem on Mr. Philips, with a character of his writings.

“ I T is altogether as equitable some account should be given of those who have distinguished themselves by their writings, as of those who are renowned for great actions. It is but reasonable they, who contribute so much to the immortality of others, should have some share in it themselves; and since their genius only is discovered by their works, it is just that their virtues should be re-

corded by their friends. For no modest men (as the person I write of was in perfection) will write their own panegyrics; and it is very hard that they should go without reputation, only because they the more deserve it. The end of writing Lives is for the imitation of the readers. It will be in the power of very few to imitate the duke of Marlborough; we must be content with admiring his great qualities and actions, without hopes of following them. The private and social virtues are more easily transcribed. The Life of Cowley is more instructive, as well as more fine, than any we have in our language. And it is to be wished, since Mr. Philips had so many of the good qualities of that poet, that I
had

had some of the abilities of his histo-
rian.

The Grecian philosophers have had their Lives written, their morals commended, and their sayings recorded. Mr. Philips had all the virtues to which most of them only pretended, and all their integrity without any of their affectation.

The French are very just to eminent men in this point ; not a learned man nor a poet can die, but all Europe must be acquainted with his accomplishments. They give praise and expect it in their turns : they commend their Patru's and Moliere's as well as their Conde's and Turenne's ; their Pellifons and Racines have their eulogies as well as the prince

whom they celebrate; and their poems, their mercuries, and orations, nay their very gazettes, are filled with the praises of the learned.

I am satisfied, had they a Philips among them, and known how to value him; had they had one of his learning, his temper, but above all of that particular turn of humour, that altogether new genius, he had been an example to their poets, and a subject of their panegyricks, and perhaps set in competition with the ancients, to whom only he ought to submit.

I shall therefore endeavour to do justice to his memory, since nobody else undertakes it. And indeed I can assign no cause why so many of his acquaintance

tance (that are as willing and more able than myself to give an account of him), should forbear to celebrate the memory of one so dear to them, but only that they look upon it as a work entirely belonging to me.

I shall content myself with giving only a character of the person and his writings, without meddling with the transactions of his life, which was altogether private: I shall only make this known observation of his family, that there was scarce so many extraordinary men in any one. I have been acquainted with five of his brothers (of which three are still living), all men of fine parts, yet all of a very unlike temper and genius. So that their fruitful mother, like

the mother of the gods, seems to have produced a numerous offspring, all of different though uncommon faculties. Of the living, neither their modesty nor the humour of the present age permits me to speak: of the dead, I may say something.

One of them had made the greatest progress in the study of the law of nature and nations of any one I know. He had perfectly mastered, and even improved, the notions of Grotius, and the more refined ones of Puffendorf. He could refute Hobbes with as much solidity as some of greater name, and expose him with as much wit as Echard. That noble study, which requires the greatest reach of reason and nicety of distinction,

was

was not at all difficult to him. 'Twas a national loss to be deprived of one who understood a science so necessary, and yet so unknown in England. I shall add only, he had the same honesty and sincerity as the person I write of, but more heat: the former was more inclined to argue, the latter to divert: one employed his reason more; the other his imagination: the former had been well qualified for those posts, which the modesty of the latter made him refuse. His other dead brother would have been an ornament to the college of which he was a member. He had a genius either for poetry or oratory; and, though very young, composed several very agreeable pieces. In all probability he would have

wrote

wrote as finely, as his brother did nobly. He might have been the Waller, as the other was the Milton of his time. The one might celebrate Marlborough, the other his beautiful offspring. This had not been so fit to describe the actions of heroes as the virtues of private men. In a word, he had been fitter for my place : and while his brother was writing upon the greatest men that any age ever produced, in a stile equal to them, he might have served as a panegyrist on him.

This is all I think necessary to say of his family. I shall proceed to himself and his writings ; which I shall first treat of, because I know they are censured

by some out of envy, and more out of ignorance.

The *Splendid Shilling*, which is far the least considerable, has the more general reputation, and perhaps hinders the character of the rest. The stile 'agreed so well with the burlesque, that the ignorant thought it could become nothing else. Every body is pleased with that work. But to judge rightly of the other, requires a perfect mastery of poetry and criticism, a just contempt of the little turns and witticisms now in vogue, and, above all, a perfect understanding of poetical diction and description.

All that have any taste of poetry will agree, that the great burlesque is much to be preferred to the low. It is much
easier

easier to make a great thing appear little, than a little one great: Cotton and others of a very low genius have done the former; but Philips, Garth, and Boileau only the latter.

A picture in miniature is every painter's talent; but a piece for a cupola, where all the figures are enlarged, yet proportioned to the eye, requires a master's hand.

It must still be more acceptable than the low burlesque, because the images of the latter are mean and filthy, and the language itself entirely unknown to all men of good breeding. The stile of Billingsgate would not make a very agreeable figure at St. James's. A gentleman would take but little pleasure
in

in language, which he would think it hard to be accosted in, or in reading words which he could not pronounce without blushing. The lofty burlesque is the more to be admired, because, to write it, the author must be master of two of the most different talents in nature. A talent to find out and expose what is ridiculous, is very different from that which is to raise and elevate. We must read Virgil and Milton^o for the one, and Horace and Hudibras for the other. We know that the authors of excellent comedies have often failed in the grave stile, and the tragedian as often in comedy. Admiration and Laughter are of such opposite natures, that they are seldom created by the same person. The
man

man of mirth is always observing the follies and weakneſſes, the ſerious writer the virtues or crimes of mankind; one is pleaſed with contemplating a beau, the other a hero. Even from the ſame object they would draw different ideas: Achilles would appear in very different lights to Therſites and Alexander. The one would admire the courage and greatneſs of his ſoul; the other would ridicule the ^ovanity and raſhneſs of his temper. As the ſatyriſt ſays to Hannibal:

—I curre per Alpes,

Ut pueris placeas, & declamatio fias.

The contrariety of ſtile to the ſubject pleaſes the more ſtrongly, becauſe it is more ſurpriſing; the expectation of the
reader

reader is pleasantly deceived, who expects an humble stile from the subject, or a great subject from the stile. It pleases the more universally because it is agreeable to the taste both of the grave and the merry ; but more particularly so to those who have a relish of the best writers, and the noblest sort of poetry. I shall produce only one passage out of this poet, which is the misfortune of his Galligaskins :

My Galligaskins, which have long with-
stood

The winter's fury and encroaching frosts,
By time subdued (what will not time
subdue !)

This

This is admirably pathetic, and shews very well the vicissitude of sublunary things. The rest goes on to a prodigious height; and a man in Greenland could hardly have made a more pathetic and terrible complaint. Is it not surprising that the subject should be so mean, and the verse so pompous? that the least things in his poetry, as in a microscope, should grow great and formidable to the eye? especially considering that, not understanding French, he had no model for his style; that he should have no writer to imitate, and himself be imitable? that he should do all this before he was twenty? at an age, which is usually pleased with a glare of false thoughts, little turns, and

and unnatural fustian; at an age, at which Cowley, Dryden, and I had almost said Virgil, were inconsiderable. So soon was his imagination at its full strength, his judgement ripe, and his humour complete.

This poem was written for his own diversion, without any design of publication. It was communicated but to *me*; but soon spread, and fell into the hands of pirates. It was put out, vilely mangled, by Ben. Bragge; *and impudently said to be corrected by the author*. This grievance is now grown more epidemical; and no man now has a right to his own thoughts, or a title to his own writings. Xenophon answered the Persian, who demanded his arms, “ We
d “ have

“ have nothing now left but our arms
 “ and our valour ; if we surrender the
 “ one, how shall we make use of the
 “ other ? ” Poets have nothing but
 their wits and their writings ; and if they
 are plundered of the latter, I don’t see
 what good the former can do them. To
 pirate, and publickly own it, to prefix
 their names to the works they steal, to
 own and avow the theft, I believe, was
 never yet heard of but in England. It
 will sound oddly to posterity, that, in a
 polite nation, in an enlightened age, un-
 der the direction of the most wise, most
 learned, and most generous encouragers
 of knowledge in the world, the proper-
 ty of a mechanick should be better se-
 cured than that of a scholar ; that the
 6 poorest

pooreſt manual operations ſhould be more valued than the nobleſt products of the brain; that it ſhould be felony to rob a cobbler of a pair of ſhoes, and no crime to deprive the beſt author of his whole ſubſiſtence; that nothing ſhould make a man a ſure title to his own writings but the ſtupidity of them: that the works of Dryden ſhould meet with leſs encouragement than thoſe of his own Flechœ, or Blackmore; that Tillotſon and St. George, Tom Thumb and Temple, ſhould be ſet on an equal foot. This is the reaſon why this very paper has been ſo long delayed; and while the moſt impudent and ſcandalous libels are publickly vended by the pi-

rates, this innocent work is forced to steal abroad as if it were a libel.

Our present writers are, by these wretches, reduced to the same condition Virgil was, when the centurion seized on his estate. But I don't doubt but I can fix upon the Mæcenas of the present age, that will retrieve them from it. But, whatever effect this piracy may have upon us, it contributed very much to the advantage of Mr.^e Philips; it helped him to a reputation, which he neither desired nor expected, and to the honour of being put upon a work of which he did not think himself capable; but the event shewed his modesty. And it was reasonable to hope, that he, who
could

could raise mean subjects so high, should still be more elevated on greater themes; that he, that could draw such noble ideas from a shilling, could not fail upon such a subject as the duke of Marlborough, *which is capable of heightening even the most low and trifling genius*. And, indeed, most of the great works which have been produced in the world, have been owing less to the poet than the patron. Men of the greatest genius are sometimes lazy, and want a spur; often modest, and dare not venture in publick: they certainly know their faults in the worst things; and even their best things they are not fond of, because the idea of what they ought to

be is far above what they are. This induced me to believe that Virgil desired his work might be burnt, had not the same Augustus that desired him to write them, preserved them from destruction. A scribbling beau may imagine a Poet *may* be induced to write, by the very pleasure he finds in writing; but that is seldom, when people are necessitated to it. I have known men row, and use very hard labour, for diversion, which, if they had been tied to, they would have thought themselves very unhappy.

But to return to *Blenheim*, that work so much admired by some, and censured by others. I have often wished he had
wrote

wrote it in Latin, that he might be out of the reach of the empty criticks, who would have as little understood his meaning in that language, as they do his beauties in his own.

False criticks have been the plague of all ages; Milton himself, in a very polite court, has been compared to the rumbling of a wheel-barrow; he had been on the wrong side, and therefore could not be a good poet. *And this, perhaps, may be Mr. Philips's case.*

But I take generally the ignorance of his readers to be the occasion of their dislike: People that have formed their taste upon the French writers, can have no relish for Philips: they admire points
and

and turns, and consequently have no judgement of what is great and majestic: he must look little in their eyes, when he soars so high as to be almost out of their view. I cannot therefore allow any admirer of the French to be a judge of Blenheim, nor any who takes Bouhours for a compleat critick. He generally judges of the ancients by the moderns, and not the moderns by the ancients; he takes those passages of their own authors to be really sublime which come the nearest to it; he often calls that a noble and great thought which is only a pretty and a fine one, and has more instances of the sublime
out

out of Ovid de Tristibus, than he has out of all Virgil.

I shall allow, therefore, only those to be judges of Philips, who make the antients, and particularly Virgil, their standard.

But, before I enter on this subject, I shall consider what is particular in the style of Philips, and examine what ought to be the style of heroick poetry, and next, enquire how far he is come up to that style.

His style is particular; because he lays aside rhyme, and writes in blank verse, and uses old words, and frequently postpones the adjective to the substantive, and the substantive to the verb;

42 J. P H I L I P S.

verb ; and leaves out little particles, *a*, and *the* ; *her*, and *his* ; and uses frequent appositions. Now let us examine, whether these alterations of style be conformable to the true sublime.

* * * * *



S M I T H.

EDMUND SMITH is one of those lucky writers who have, without much labour, attained high reputation, and who are mentioned with reverence rather for the possession than the exertion of uncommon abilities.

Of his life little is known; and that little claims no praise but what can be given to intellectual excellence, seldom employed to any virtuous purpose. His character, as given by Mr. Oldisworth, with all the partiality of friendship,

b

which

which is said by Dr. Burton to show *what fine things one man of parts can say of another*; and which, however, comprises great part of what can be known of Mr. Smith, it is better to transcribe at once, than to take by pieces. I shall subjoin such little memorials as accident has enabled me to collect.

Mr. EDMUND SMITH was the only son of an eminent merchant, one Mr. Neale, by a daughter of the famous baron Lechmere. Some misfortunes of his father, which were soon after followed by his death, were the occasion of the son's being left
very

very young in the hands of a near relation (one who married Mr. Neale's sister) whose name was Smith.

This gentleman and his lady treated him as their own child, and put him to Westminster-school under the care of Dr. Busby; whence after the loss of his faithful and generous guardian (whose name he assumed and retained) he was removed to Christ-church in Oxford, and there by his aunt handsomely maintained till her death; after which he continued a member of that learned and ingenious society, till within five years of his own; though some time before his leaving Christ-church, he was sent for by his mother to Worcester, and owned and acknowledged as her

legitimate son; which had not been mentioned, but to wipe off the aspersions that were ignorantly cast by some on his birth. It is to be remembered for our author's honour, that, when at Westminster election he stood a candidate for one of the universities, he so signally distinguished himself by his conspicuous performances, that there arose no small contention between the representative electors of Trinity-college in Cambridge and Christ-church in Oxon, which of those two royal societies should adopt him as their own. But the electors of Trinity-college having the preference of choice that year, they resolutely elected him; who yet, being invited at the same time to Christ-church, chose

chose to accept of a studentship there. Mr. Smith's perfections, as well natural as acquired, seem to have been formed upon Horace's plan; who says in his Art of Poetry,

—*Ego nec studium sine divite venâ,
Nec rude quid profit video ingenium: al-
terius sic
Altera poscit opem res, & conjurat amice.*

He was endowed by Nature with all those excellent and necessary qualifications which are previous to the accomplishment of a great man. His memory was large and tenacious, yet by a *curious felicity chiefly* susceptible of the finest impressions, it received from the best authors he read, which it always

preserved in their primitive strength and amiable order.

He had a quickness of apprehension, and vivacity of understanding, which easily took in and surmounted the most subtle and knotty parts of mathematics and metaphysics. His wit was prompt and flowing, yet solid and piercing; his taste delicate, his head clear, and his way of expressing his thoughts perspicuous and engaging. I shall say nothing of his person, which yet was so well *turned*, that no neglect of himself in his dress could render it disagreeable; inasmuch that the fair sex, who observed and esteemed him, at once commended and reproved him by the name of the *hand-*

some sloven. An eager but generous and noble emulation grew up with him; which (as it were a rational sort of instinct) pushed him upon striving to excel in every art and science that could make him a credit to his college, and that college the ornament of the most learned and polite university; and it was his happiness to have several contemporaries and fellow-students, who exercised and excited this virtue in themselves and others, thereby becoming so deservedly in favour with this age, and so good a proof of its nice discernment. His judgement, naturally good, soon ripened into an exquisite fineness and distinguishing sagacity, which as it was active and busy, so it was vigo-

rous and manly, keeping even paces with a rich and strong imagination, always upon the wing, and never tired with aspiring. Hence it was, that, though he writ as young as Cowley, he had no puerilities; and his earliest productions were so far from having any thing in them mean and trifling, that, like the junior compositions of Mr. Stepney, they may make grey authors blush. There are many of his first essays in oratory, in epigram, elegy, and epique, still handed about the university in manuscript, which shew a masterly hand; and, though maimed and injured by frequent transcribing, make their way into our most celebrated miscellanies, where they shine with uncommon

mon lustre. Besides those verses in the Oxford books, which he could not help setting his name to, several of his compositions came abroad under other names, which his own singular modesty, and faithful silence, strove in vain to conceal. The *Encœnia* and publick Collections of the Univerfity upon State Subjects were never in fuch esteem, either for elegy or congratulation, as when he contributed most largely to them; and it was natural for those who knew his peculiar way of writing to turn to his share in the work, as by far the most relishing part of the entertainment. As his parts were extraordinary, so he well knew how to improve them; and not only to polish the diamond, but enchafe

chafe it in the most solid and durable metal. Though he was an academic the greatest part of his life, yet he contracted no sourness of temper, no spice of pedantry, no itch of disputation, or obstinate contention for the old or new philosophy, no assuming way of dictating to others, which are faults (though excusable) which some are insensibly led into, who are constrained to dwell long within the walls of a private college. His conversation was pleasant and instructive; and what Horace said of Plotius, Varius, and Virgil, might justly be applied to him :

Nil ego contulerim jucundo sanus Amico.

Sat. v. l. 1.

As

As correct a writer as he was in his most elaborate pieces, he read the works of others with candor, and reserved his greatest severity for his own compositions; being readier to cherish and advance, than damp or depress a rising genius, and as patient of being excelled himself (if any could excel him) as industrious to excel others.

'Twere to be wished he had confined himself to a particular profession, who was capable of surpassing in any; but in this, his want of application was in a great measure owing to his want of due encouragement.

He passed through the exercises of the college and university with unusual applause; and though he often suffered
his

his friends to call him off from his retirements, and to lengthen out those jovial avocations, yet his return to his studies was so much the more passionate, and his intention upon those refined pleasures of reading and thinking so vehement (to which his facetious and unbended intervals bore no proportion) that the habit grew upon him, and the series of meditation and reflection being kept up whole weeks together, he could better sort his ideas, and take in the sundry parts of a science at one view, without interruption or confusion. Some indeed of his acquaintance, who were pleased to distinguish between the wit and the scholar, extolled him altogether on the account of the first of these titles ;
but

but others, who knew him better, could not forbear doing him justice as a prodigy in both kinds. He had signalized himself in the schools, as a philosopher and polemick of extensive knowledge and deep penetration; and went through all the courses with a wise regard to the dignity and importance of each science. I remember him in the Divinity-school responding and disputing with a perspicuous energy, a ready exactness, and commanding force of argument, when Dr. Jane worthily presided in the chair; whose condescending and disinterested commendation of him, gave him such a reputation as silenced the envious malice of his enemies, who durst not contradict the approbation of so profound a
master

master in theology. None of those self-sufficient creatures, who have either trifled with philosophy by attempting to ridicule it, or have encumbered it with novel terms, and burdensome explanations, understood its real weight and purity half so well as Mr. Smith. He was too discerning to allow of the character of unprofitable, rugged, and abstruse, which some superficial sciolists (so very smooth and polite as to admit of no impression), either out of an unthinking indolence, or an ill-grounded prejudice, had affixed to this sort of studies. He knew the thorny terms of philosophy served well to fence-in the true doctrines of religion; and looked upon school-divinity as upon a rough but well-

well-wrought armour, which might at once adorn and defend the Christian hero, and equip him for the combat.

Mr. Smith had a long and perfect intimacy with all the Greek and Latin Classics; with whom he had carefully compared whatever was worth perusing in the French, Spanish, and Italian (to which languages he was no stranger), and in all the celebrated writers of his own country. But then, according to the curious observation of the late earl of Shaftsbury, he kept the poet in awe by regular criticism, and, as it were, married the two arts for their mutual support and improvement. There was not a tract of credit, upon that subject, which he had not diligently examined,

mined, from Aristotle down to Hedelin and Boffû; so that, having each rule constantly before him, he could carry the art through every poem, and at once point out the graces and deformities. By this means he seemed to read with a design to correct, as well as imitate.

Being thus prepared, he could not but taste every little delicacy that was set before him; though it was impossible for him at the same time to be fed and nourished with any thing but what was substantial and lasting. He considered the antients and moderns not as parties or rivals for fame, but as architects upon one and the same plan; the Art of Poetry; according to which he judged,

ap-

approved, and blamed, without flattery or detraction. If he did not always commend the compositions of others, it was not ill-nature (which was not in his temper), but strict justice that would not let him call a few flowers set in ranks, a glib measure, and so many couplets by the name of poetry : he was of Ben Jonson's opinion, who could not admire,

—Verses as smooth and soft as cream,
In which there was neither depth nor
stream.

And therefore, though his want of complaisance for some mens overbearing vanity made him enemies, yet the better part of mankind were obliged by the freedom of his reflections.

His Bodleian Speech, though taken from a remote and imperfect copy, hath shewn the world how great a master he was of the Ciceronian eloquence, mixed with the conciseness and force of Demosthenes, the elegant and moving turns of Pliny, and the acute and wise reflections of Tacitus.

Since Temple and Roscommon, no man understood Horace better, especially as to his happy diction, rolling numbers, beautiful imagery, and alternate mixture of the soft and the sublime. This endeared Dr. Hanes's odes to him, the finest genius for Latin lyric since the Augustan age. His friend Mr. Phillips's ode to Mr. St. John (late lord Bolingbroke), after the manner of Horace's

race's Lufory or Amatorian Odes, is certainly a master-piece: but Mr. Smith's Pocockius is of the sublimer kind, though, like Waller's writings upon Oliver Cromwell, it wants not the most delicate and surprising turns peculiar to the person praised. I do not remember to have seen any thing like it in Dr. Bathurst, who had made some attempts this way with applause. He was an excellent judge of humanity; and so good an historian, that in familiar discourse he would talk over the most memorable facts in antiquity, the lives, actions, and characters of celebrated men, with amazing facility and accuracy. As he had thoroughly read and digested Thuanus's works, so he was able to copy after him:

and his talent in this kind was so well known and allowed, that he had been singled out by some great men to write a history, which it was for their interest to have done with the utmost art and dexterity. I shall not mention for what reasons this design was dropped, tho' they are very much to Mr. Smith's honour. The truth is, and I speak it before living witnesses, whilst an agreeable company could fix him upon a subject of useful literature, nobody shone to greater advantage : he seemed to be that Memmius whom Lucretius speaks of ;

—*Quem tu, Dea, tempore in omni
Omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus.*

His

His works are not many, and those scattered up and down in Miscellanies and Collections, being wrested from him by his friends with great difficulty and reluctance. All of them together make but a small part of that much greater body which lies dispersed in the possession of numerous acquaintance; and cannot perhaps be made entire, without great injustice to him, because few of them had his last hand, and the transcriber was often obliged to take the liberties of a friend. His condolance for the death of Mr. Philips is full of the noblest beauties, and hath done justice to the ashes of that second Milton, whose writings will last as long as the English language, generosity, and valour.

For him Mr. Smith had contracted a perfect friendship ; a passion he was most susceptible of, and whose laws he looked upon as sacred and inviolable.

Every subject that passed under his pen had all the life, proportion, and embellishments bestowed on it, which an exquisite skill, a warm imagination, and a cool judgement, could possibly bestow on it. The epique, lyrick, elegiac, every sort of poetry he touched upon (and he had touched upon a great variety), was raised to its proper height, and the differences between each of them observed with a judicious accuracy. We saw the old rules and new beauties placed in admirable order by each other ; and there was a predominant fancy and spirit of
his

his own infused, superior to what some draw off from the ancients, or from poeſies here and there culled out of the moderns, by a painful induſtry and fervile imitation. His contrivances were adroit and magnificent; his images lively and adequate; his ſentiments charming and majeſtick; his expreſſions natural and bold; his numbers various and ſounding; and that enameled mixture of claſſical wit, which, without redundance and affectation, sparkled through his writings, and was no leſs pertinent than agreeable.

His *Phædra* is a conſummate tragedy, and the ſucceſs of it was as great as the moſt ſanguine expectations of his friends could promiſe or foreſee. The number

of nights, and the common method of filling the house, are not always the surest marks of judging what encouragement a play meets with : but the generosity of all the persons of a refined taste about town was remarkable on this occasion ; and it must not be forgotten how zealously Mr. Addison espoused his interest, with all the elegant judgement and diffusive good-nature for which that accomplished gentleman and author is so justly valued by mankind. But as to *Phædra*, she has certainly made a finer figure under Mr. Smith's conduct, upon the English stage, than either Rome or Athens ; and if she excels the Greek and Latin *Phædra*, I need not say she surpasses the French one, tho' embellished with whatever regular

gular

gular beauties and moving softness Racine himself could give her.

No man had a juster notion of the difficulty of composing than Mr. Smith, and he sometimes would create greater difficulties than he had reason to apprehend. Writing with ease, what (as Mr. Wycherley speaks) may be easily written, moved his indignation. When he was writing upon a subject, he would seriously consider what Demosthenes, Homer, Virgil, or Horace, if alive, would say upon that occasion, which whetted him to exceed himself as well as others. Nevertheless he could not, or would not, finish several subjects he undertook; which may be imputed either to the briskness of his fancy, still hunt-

hunting after new matter, or to an occasional indolence, which spleen and lassitude brought upon him, which, of all his foibles, the world was least inclined to forgive. That this was not owing to conceit and vanity, or a fulness of himself (a frailty which has been imputed to no less men than Shakespeare and Jonson), is clear from hence; because he left his works to the entire disposal of his friends, whose most rigorous censures he even courted and solicited; submitting to their animadversions, and the freedom they took with them, with an unreserved and prudent resignation.

I have seen sketches and rough draughts of some poems he designed, set out analytically; wherein the fable,

structure, and connexion, the images, incidents, moral, episodes, and a great variety of ornaments, were so finely laid out, so well fitted to the rules of art, and squared so exactly to the precedents of the antients, that I have often looked on these poetical elements with the same concern, with which curious men are affected at the sight of the most entertaining remains and ruins of an antique figure or building. Those fragments of the learned, which some men have been so proud of their pains in collecting, are useless rarities, without form and without life, when compared with these embryo's, which wanted not spirit enough to preserve them; so that I cannot help thinking, that, if some of them

them were to come abroad, they would be as highly valued by the poets, as the sketches of Julio and Titian are by the painters; though there is nothing in them but a few out-lines, as to the design and proportion.

It must be confessed, that Mr. Smith had some defects in his conduct, which those are most apt to remember who could imitate him in nothing else. His freedom with himself drew severer acknowledgements from him than all the malice he ever provoked was capable of advancing, and he did not scruple to give even his misfortunes the hard name of faults; but if the world had half his good-nature, all the shady parts would be entirely struck out of his character.

A man,

A man, who, under poverty, calamities, and disappointments, could make so many friends, and those so truly valuable, must have just and noble ideas of the passion of friendship, in the success of which consisted the greatest, if not the only, happiness of his life. He knew very well what was due to his birth, though Fortune threw him short of it in every other circumstance of life. He avoided making any, though perhaps reasonable, complaints of her dispensations, under which he had honour enough to be easy, without touching the favours she flung in his way when offered to him at the price of a more durable reputation. He took care to have no dealings with mankind, in
which

which he could not be just; and he desired to be at no other expence in his pretensions than that of intrinsick merit, which was the only burthen and reproach he ever brought upon his friends. He could say, as Horace did of himself, what I never yet saw translated;

—*Meo sum pauper in ære.*

At his coming to town, no man was more surrounded by all those who really had or pretended to wit, or more courted by the great men, who had then a power and opportunity of encouraging arts and sciences, and gave proofs of their fondness for the name of Patron in many instances, which will ever be remembered to their glory. Mr. Smith's
cha-

character grew upon his friends by intimacy, and outwent the strongest prepossessions, which had been conceived in his favour. Whatever quarrel a few four creatures, whose obscurity is their happiness, may possibly have to the age; yet amidst a studied neglect, and total disuse of all those ceremonial attendances, fashionable equipments, and external recommendations, which are thought necessary introductions into the *grande monde*, this gentleman was so happy as still to please; and whilst the rich, the gay, the noble, and honourable, saw how much he excelled in wit and learning, they easily forgave him all other differences. Hence it was that both his acquaintance and retirements were his
own

own free choice. What Mr. Prior observes upon a very great character, was true of him; *that most of his faults brought their excuse with them.*

Those who blamed him most understood him least; it being the custom of the vulgar to charge an excess upon the most complaisant, and to form a character by the morals of a few, who have sometimes spoiled an hour or two in good company. Where only fortune is wanting to make a great name, that single exception can never pass upon the best judges and most equitable observers of mankind; and when the time comes for the world to spare their pity, we may justly enlarge our demands upon them for their admiration.

Some few years before his death, he had engaged himself in several considerable undertakings; in all which he had prepared the world to expect mighty things from him. I have seen about ten sheets of his *English Pindar*, which exceeded any thing of that kind I could ever hope for in our own language. He had drawn out the plan of a tragedy of the *Lady Jane Grey*, and had gone through several scenes of it. But he could not well have bequeathed that work to better hands than where, I hear, it is at present lodged; and the bare mention of two such names may justify the largest expectations, and is sufficient to make the town an agreeable invitation.

d

His

His greatest and noblest undertaking was *Longinus*. He had finished an entire translation of the *Sublime*, which he sent to the reverend Mr. Richard Parker, a friend of his, late of Merton College, an exact critick in the Greek tongue, from whom it came to my hands. The French version of Monsieur Boileau, though truly valuable, was far short of it. He proposed a large addition to this work, of notes and observations of his own, with an entire system of the Art of Poetry, in three books, under the titles of *Thought*, *Diction*, and *Figure*. I saw the last of these perfect, and in a fair copy, in which he shewed prodigious judgement and reading; and particularly had reformed the Art of
Rhe-

Rhetorick, by reducing that vast and confused heap of terms, with which a long succession of pedants had encumbered the world, to a very narrow compass, comprehending all that was useful and ornamental in poetry. Under each head and chapter, he intended to make remarks upon all the ancients and moderns, the Greek, Latin, English, French, Spanish, and Italian poets, and to note their several beauties and defects.

What remains of his works is left, as I am informed, in the hands of men of worth and judgement, who loved him. It cannot be supposed they would suppress any thing that was his, but out of respect to his memory, and

for want of proper hands. to finish what
so great a genius had begun.

SUCH is the declamation of Oldif-
worth, written while his admiration was
yet fresh, and his kindness warm; and
therefore such as, without any criminal
purpose of deceiving, shews a strong de-
fire to make the most of all favourable
truth. I cannot much commend the
performance. The praise is often in-
distinct, and the sentences are loaded
with words of more pomp than use.
There is little however that can be con-
tradicted, even when a plainer tale comes
to be told.

EDMUND NEAL, known by the name of Smith, was born at Handley, the feat of the Lechmeres in Worcestershire. The year of his birth is uncertain.

He was educated at Westminster. It is known to have been the practice of Dr. Busby to detain those youths long at school, of whom he had formed the highest expectations. Smith took his Master's degree on the 8th of July 1696 : he therefore was probably admitted into the university in 1689, when we may suppose him twenty years old.

His reputation for literature in his college was such as has been told ; but the indecency and licentiousness of his behaviour drew upon him, Dec. 24,

1694, while he was yet only Batchelor, a publick admonition, entered upon record, in order to his expulsion. Of this reproof the effect's not known. He was probably less notorious. At Oxford, as we all know, much will be forgiven to literary merit; and of that he had given sufficient evidence by his excellent ode on the death of the great Orientalist, Dr. Pocock, who died in 1691, and whose praise must have been written by Smith when he had been yet but two years in the university.

This ode, which closed the second volume of the *Musæ Anglicanæ*, though perhaps some objections may be made to its Latinity, is by far the best Lyrick composition in that collection; nor do I
know

know where to find it equalled among the modern writers. It expresses, with great felicity, images not classical in classical diction: its digressions and returns have been deservedly recommended by Trapp as models for imitation.

He has several imitations of Cowley :

Vestitur hinc tot fermo coloribus

Quot tu, Pococki, dissimilis tui

Orator effers, quot vicissim

Te memores celebrare gaudent.

I will not commend the figure which makes the orator *pronounce colours*, or give to *colours memory* and *delight*. I quote it, however, as an imitation of these lines ;

So many languages he had in store,
That only Fame shall speak of him in
more.

The simile, by which an old man, retaining the fire of his youth, is compared to *Ætna* flaming through the snow, which Smith has used with great pomp, is stolen from Cowley, however little worth the labour of conveyance.

He proceeded to take his degree of Master of Arts July 8, 1696. Of the exercises which he performed on that occasion, I have not heard any thing memorable.

As his years advanced, he advanced in reputation; for he continued to cultivate his mind; but he did not amend
his



his irregularities, by which he gave so much offence, that, April 24, 1700, the Dean and Chapter declared “ the
“ place of Mr. Smith void, he having
“ been convicted of riotous misbeha-
“ viour in the house of Mr. Cole an
“ apothecary ; but it was referred to the
“ Dean when and upon what occasion
“ the sentence should be put in execu-
“ tion.”

Thus tenderly was he treated : the governors of his college could hardly keep him, and yet wished that he would not force them to drive him away.

Some time afterwards he assumed an appearance of decency ; in his own phrase, he *whitened* himself, having a desire to obtain the censorship, an office
of

of honour and some profit in the college; but when the election came, the preference was given to Mr. *Foulkes*, his junior; the same, I suppose, that joined with *Freind* in an edition of part of *Demosthenes*; it not being thought proper to trust the superintendence of others to a man who took so little care of himself.

From this time Smith employed his malice and his wit against the Dean, Dr. Aldrich, whom he considered as the opponent of his claim. Of his lampoon upon him, I once heard a single line too gross to be repeated.

But he was still a genius and a scholar, and Oxford was unwilling to lose him: he was endured, with all his
pranks

pranks and his vices, two years longer ; but on Dec. 20, 1705, at the instance of all the canons, the sentence declared five years before was put in execution.

The execution was, I believe, silent and tender ; for one of his friends, from whom I learned much of his life, appeared not to know it.

He was now driven to London, where he associated himself with the Whigs; whether because they were in power, or because the Tories had expelled him, or because he was a Whig by principle, may perhaps be doubted. He was however careſſed by men of great abilities; whatever were their party, and was supported by the liberality of thoſe who delighted in his converſation.

There

There was once a design hinted at by Oldisworth to have made him useful. One evening, as he was sitting with a friend at a tavern, he was called down by the waiter; and, having staid some time below, came up thoughtful. After a pause, said he to his friend, "He
" that wanted me below was Addison,
" whose business was to tell me that a
" History of the Revolution was in-
" tended, and to propose that I should
" undertake it. I said, what shall I do
" with the character of lord Sunder-
" land? and Addison immediately re-
" turned, When, Rag, were you drunk
" last? and went away."

Captain *Rag* was a name which he got at Oxford by his negligence of dress.

This

This story I heard from the late Mr. Clark of Lincoln's Inn, to whom it was told by the friend of Smith.

Such scruples might debar him from some profitable employments ; but as they could not deprive him of any real esteem, they left him many friends ; and no man was ever better introduced to the theatre than he, who, in that violent conflict of parties, had a Prologue and Epilogue from the first wits on either side.

But learning and nature will now and then take different courses. His play pleased the criticks, and the criticks only. It was, as Addison has recorded, hardly heard the third night. Smith had indeed trusted entirely to his merit ;
had

had ensured no band of applauders, nor used any artifice to force success, and found that naked excellence was not sufficient for its own support.

The play, however, was bought by Lintot, who advanced the price from fifty guineas, the current rate, to sixty; and Halifax, the general patron, accepted the dedication. Smith's indolence kept him from writing the dedication, till Lintot, after fruitless importunity, gave notice that he would publish the play without it. Now therefore it was written; and Halifax expected the author with his book, and had prepared to reward him with a place of three hundred pounds a year. Smith, by pride, or caprice, or indolence, or bashfulness,

7

neglected

neglected to attend him, though doubtless warned and pressed by his friends, and at last missed his reward by not going to solicit it.

Addison has, in the *Spectator*, mentioned the neglect of Smith's tragedy as disgraceful to the nation, and imputes it to the fondness for operas then prevailing. The authority of Addison is great; yet the voice of the people, when to please the people is the purpose, deserves regard. In this question, I cannot but think the people in the right. The fable is mythological, a story which we are accustomed to reject as false, and the manners are so distant from our own, that we know them not by sympathy but by study: the ignorant do not understand

stand the action, the learned reject it as a school-boy's tale; *incredulus odi*. What I cannot for a moment believe, I cannot for a moment behold with interest or anxiety. The sentiments thus remote from life, are removed yet further by the diction, which is too luxuriant and splendid for dialogue, and envelopes the thoughts rather than displays them. It is a scholar's play, such as may please the reader rather than the spectator; the work of a vigorous and elegant mind, accustomed to please itself with its own conceptions, but of little acquaintance with the course of life.

Dennis tells, in one of his pieces, that he had once a design to have written the tragedy of *Phædra*; but was convinced
that

that the action was too mythological.

.In 1709, a year after the exhibition of *Phædra*, died John Philips, the friend and fellow-collegian of Smith, who, on that occasion, wrote a poem, which justice must place among the best elegies which our language can shew, an elegant mixture of fondness and admiration, of dignity and softness. There are some passages too ludicrous ; but every human performance has its faults.

This elegy it was the mode among his friends to purchase for a guinea ; and, as his acquaintance was numerous, it was a very profitable poem.

Of his *Pindar*, mentioned by Oldisworth, I have never otherwise heard. His

Longinus he intended to accompany with some illustrations, and had selected his instances of the false *Sublime* from the works of Blackmore.

He resolved to try again the fortune of the Stage, with the story of Lady Jane Grey. It is not unlikely that his experience of the inefficacy and incredibility of a mythological tale, might determine him to choose an action from English History, at no great distance from our own times, which was to end in a real event, produced by the operation of known characters.

A subject will not easily occur that can give more opportunities of informing the understanding, for which Smith was unquestionably qualified, or for moving

moving the passions, in which I suspect him to have had less power.

Having formed his plan, and collected materials, he declared that a few months would complete his design; and, that he might pursue his work with fewer avocations, he was, in June 1710, invited by Mr. George Duckett to his house at Gartham in Wiltshire. Here he found such opportunities of indulgence as did not much forward his studies, and particularly some strong ale, too delicious to be resisted. He eat and drank till he found himself plethorick: and then, resolving to ease himself by evacuation, he wrote to an apothecary in the neighbourhood a prescription of a purge so forcible, that the apothecary

thought it his duty to delay it till he had given notice of its danger. Smith, not pleased with the contradiction of a shopman, and boastful of his own knowledge, treated the notice with rude contempt, and swallowed his own medicine, which, in July 1710, brought him to the grave. He was buried at Gartham.

Many years afterwards, Duckett communicated to Oldmixon the historian an account, pretended to have been received from Smith, that Clarendon's History was, in its publication, corrupted by Aldrich, Smalridge, and Atterbury; and that Smith was employed to forge and insert the alterations.

This story was published triumphantly by Oldmixon, and may be supposed

to have been eagerly received : but its progress was soon checked ; for finding its way into the Journal of Trevoux, it fell under the eye of Atterbury, then an exile in France, who immediately denied the charge, with this remarkable particular, ~~that~~ he never in his whole life had once spoken to Smith ; his company being, as must be inferred, not accepted by those who attended to their characters.

The charge was afterwards very diligently refuted by Dr. Burton of Eaton ; a man eminent for literature, and, though not of the same party with Aldrich and Atterbury, too studious of truth to leave them burthened with a false charge. The testimonies which

he has collected, have convinced mankind that either Smith or Duckett were guilty of wilful and malicious falsehood.

This controversy brought into view those parts of Smith's life, which with more honour to his name might have been concealed.

Of Smith I can yet say a little more. He was a man of such estimation among his companions, that the casual censures or praises which he dropped in conversation were considered, like those of Scaliger, as worthy of preservation.

He had great readiness and exactness of criticism, and by a cursory glance over a new composition would exactly tell all its faults and beauties.

He

He was remarkable for the power of reading with great rapidity, and of retaining with great fidelity what he so easily collected.

He therefore always knew what the present question required ; and when his friends expressed their wonder at his acquisitions, made in a state of apparent negligence and drunkenness, he never discovered his hours of reading or method of study, but involved himself in affected silence, and fed his own vanity with their admiration and conjectures.

One practice he had, which was easily observed : if any thought or image was presented to his mind, that he could use or improve, he did not suffer it to be lost ; but, amidst the jollity of a

tavern, or in the warmth of conversation, very diligently committed it to paper.

Thus it was that he had gathered two quires of hints for his new tragedy; of which Rowe, when they were put into his hands, could make, as he says, very little use, but which the collector considered as a valuable stock of materials.

When he came to London, his way of life connected him with the licentious and dissolute; and he affected the airs and gaiety of a man of pleasure; but his dress was always deficient: scholastick cloudiness still hung about him, and his merriment was sure to produce the scorn of his companions.

With

With all his carelessness, and all his vices, he was one of the murmurers at Fortune; and wondered why he was suffered to be poor, when Addison was caressed and preferred: nor would a very little have contented him; for he estimated his wants at six hundred pounds a year.

In his course of reading it was particular, that he had diligently perused, and accurately remembered, the old romances of knight errantry.

He had a high opinion of his own merit, and something contemptuous in his treatment of those whom he considered as not qualified to oppose or contradict him. He had many frailties; yet it cannot but be supposed that he
had

had great merit, who could obtain to the same play a prologue from Addison, and an epilogue from Prior; and who could have at once the patronage of Halifax, and the praise of Oldisworth.

For the power of communicating these minute memorials, I am indebted to my conversation with Gilbert Walmsley, late register of the ecclesiastical court of Litchfield, who was acquainted both with Smith and Duckett; and declared, that, if the tale concerning Clarendon were forged, he should suspect Duckett of the falsehood; *for Rag was a man of great veracity.*

Of Gilbert Walmsley, thus presented to my mind, let me indulge myself in the remembrance. I knew him very
early;

early ; he was one of the first friends that literature procured me, and I hope that at least my gratitude made me worthy of his notice.

He was of an advanced age, and I was only not a boy ; yet he never received my notions with contempt. He was a Whig, with all the virulence and malevolence of his party ; yet difference of opinion did not keep us apart. I honoured him, and he endured me.

He had mingled with the gay world, without exemption from its vices or its follies, but had never neglected the cultivation of his mind ; his belief of Revelation was unshaken ; his learning preserved his principles ; he grew first regular, and then pious.

His

His studies had been so various, that I am not able to name a man of equal knowledge. His acquaintance with books was great; and what he did not immediately know, he could at least tell where to find. Such was his amplitude of learning, and such his copiousness of communication, that it may be doubted whether a day now passes in which I have not some advantage from his friendship.

At this man's table I enjoyed many chearful and instructive hours, with companions such as are not often found; with one who has lengthened, and one who has gladdened life; with Dr. James, whose skill in physick will be long remembered; and with David Gar-
rick,

rick, whom I hoped to have gratified with this character of our common friend : but what are the hopes of man ! I am disappointed by that stroke of death, which has eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the publick stock of harmless pleasure.



In the Library at Oxford is the following ludicrous Analysis of *Pocockius* :

EX AUTOGRAPHO.

Written by the Author.

OPUSCULUM hoc, Halberdarie amplissime, in lucem proferre haftenus distuli, judicii tui acumen subveritus magis quam bipennis. Tandem aliquando Oden hanc ad te mitto sublimem, teneram, flebilem, suavem, qualem demum divinus (si musis vacaret) scripsisset Gastrellus. Adeo scilicet sublimem ut inter legendum dormire, adeo flebilem ut ridere velis. Cujus elegantiam ut melius inspicias, versum, ordinem & materiam breviter referam. 1^{mus} versus de

duobus præliis decantatis. 2^{us} & 3^{us} de Lotharingio, cuniculis subterraneis, faxis, ponto, hostibus, & Asia. 4^{us} & 5^{us} de catenis, sudibus, uncis, draconibus, tigribus & crocodilis. 6^{us}, 7^{us}, 8^{us}, 9^{us}, de Gomorrha, de Babylone, Babele, & quodam domi suæ preregrino. 10^{us} aliquid de quodam Pocockio. 11^{us}, 12^{us}, de Syriâ, Solymâ. 13^{us}, 14^{us}, Hoseâ & quercu & de juvene quodam valde fene. 15^{us}, 16^{us}, de Ætnâ & quomodo Pocockio fit valde similis. 17^{us}, 18^{us}, de tubâ, astro, umbrâ, flaminis, rotis, Pocockio non neglecto. Cætera de Christianis, Ottomanno, Babyloniis, Arabibus, & gravissimâ agrorum melancholiâ, de Cæsare, Flacco, Nestore, & miserando juvenis cujusdam florentissimi fato, anno ætatis

ætatis suæ centesimo præmaturè abrepto. Quæ omnia cum accuratè expendis, necesse est ut Oden hanc meam admirandâ planè varietati constare fatearis. Subito ad Batavos proficiscor lauro ab illis donandus. Prius vero Pembrochieneses voco ad certamen Poeticum. Vale.

Illustrissima tua deosculor crura.

E. SMITH.



P O M F R E T.

OF Mr. JOHN POMFRET
 nothing is known but from a
 slight and confused account prefixed to
 his poems by a nameless friend; who
 relates, that he was the son of the Rev.
 Mr. Pomfret, rector of Luton in Bed-
 fordshire; that he was bred at Cam-
 bridge, entered into orders, and was
 rector of Malden in Bedfordshire, and
 might have risen in the Church; but
 that, when he applied to Dr. Compton,
 bishop of London, for institution to a
 b living

2 P O M F R E T.

living of considerable value, to which he had been presented, he found a troublesome obstruction raised by a malicious interpretation of some passage in his *Choice*; from which it was inferred, that he considered happiness as more likely to be found in the company of a mistress than of a wife.

This reproach was easily obliterated : for it had happened to Pomfret as to almost all other men who plan schemes of life; he had departed from his purpose, and was then married.

The malice of his enemies had however a very fatal consequence : the delay constrained his attendance in London, where he caught the small-pox,
and

P O M F R E T. 3

and died in 1703, in the thirty-sixth year of his age.

He published his poems in 1699; and has been always the favourite of that class of readers, who, without vanity or criticism, seek only their own amusement.

His *Choice* exhibits a system of life adapted to common notions, and equal to common expectations; such a state as affords plenty and tranquillity, without exclusion of intellectual pleasures. Perhaps no composition in our language has been oftener perused than Pomfret's *Choice*.

In his other poems there is an easy volubility; the pleasure of smooth metre

4 P O M F R E T.

tre is afforded to the ear; and the mind is not oppressed with ponderous or entangled with intricate sentiment. He pleases many, and he who pleases many must have merit.



H U G H E S.

JOHN HUGHES, the son of a citizen of London, and of Anne Burgefs, of an ancient family in Wiltshire, was born at Marlborough, July 29, 1677. He was educated at a private fchool; and though his advances in literature are in the *Biographia* very oftentatiously difplayed, the name of his mafter is fomewhat ungratefully concealed.

2 H U G H E S.

At nineteen he drew the plan of a tragedy; and paraphrased, rather too diffusely, the ode of Horace which begins *Integer Vitæ*. To poetry he added the science of musick, in which he seems to have attained considerable skill, together with the practice of design, or rudiments of painting.

His studies did not withdraw him wholly from business, nor did business hinder him from study. He had a place in the office of ordnance, and was secretary to several commissions for purchasing lands necessary to secure the royal docks at Chatham and Portsmouth; yet found time to acquaint himself with modern languages.

In

In 1697 he published a poem on the *Peace of Ryſwick*; and in 1699 another piece, called the *Court of Neptune*, on the return of king William, which he addreſſed to Mr. Montague, the general patron of the followers of the Muſes. The ſame year he produced a ſong on the duke of Glouceſter's birth-day.

He did not confine himſelf to poetry, but cultivated other kinds of writing with great ſucceſs; and about this time ſhewed his knowledge of human nature by an *Eſſay on the Pleaſure of being deceived*. In 1702 he published, on the death of king William, a Pindarick ode called the *House of Naſſau*; and wrote another paraphraſe on the *Otium Divos* of Horace.

4 H U G H E S.

In 1703 his ode on Musick was performed at Stationer's Hall; and he wrote afterwards six cantatas, which were set to musick by the greatest master of that time, and seem intended to oppose or exclude the Italian opera, an exotick and irrational entertainment, which has been always combated, and always has prevailed.

His reputation was now so far advanced, that the publick began to pay reverence to his name; and he was solicited to prefix a preface to the translation of *Boccalini*, a writer whose satirical vein cost him his life in Italy; but who never, I believe, found many readers in this country, even though
intro-

introduced by such powerful recommendation.

He translated Fontanelle's *Dialogues of the Dead*; and his version was perhaps read at that time, but is now neglected; for by a book not necessary, and owing its reputation wholly to its turn of diction, little notice can be gained but from those who can enjoy the graces of the original. To the dialogues of Fontanelle he added two composed by himself; and, though not only an honest but a pious man, dedicated his work to the earl of Wharton. He judged skillfully enough of his own interest; for Wharton, when he went lord lieutenant to Ireland, offered to take Hughes with him, and establish him; but Hughes,

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6 H U G H E S.

having hopes or promises from another man in power, of some provision more suitable to his inclination, declined Wharton's offer, and obtained nothing from the other.

He translated the *Miser* of Moliere; but never offered it to the Stage; and occasionally amused himself with making versions of favourite scenes in other plays.

Being now received as a wit among the wits, he paid his contributions to literary undertakings, and assisted both the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*. In 1712 he translated Vertot's History of the *Revolution of Portugal*; produced an *Ode to the Creator of the World, from the Fragments of Orpheus*; and brought upon the

the Stage an opera called *Calypso and Telemachus*, intended to shew that the English language might be very happily adapted to musick. This was impudently opposed by those who were employed in the Italian opera; and, what cannot be told without indignation, the intruders had such interest with the duke of Shrewsbury, then lord chamberlain, who had married an Italian, as to obtain an obstruction of the profits, though not an inhibition of the performance.

There was at this time a project formed by Tonson for a translation of the *Pharsalia*, by several hands; and Hughes englisht the tenth book. But this design, as must often happen where

8 H U G H E S.

the concurrence of many is necessary, fell to the ground ; and the whole work was afterwards performed by Rowe.

His acquaintance with the great writers of his time appears to have been very general ; but of his intimacy with Addison there is a remarkable proof. It is told, on good authority, that *Cato* was finished and played by his persuasion. It had long wanted the last act, which he was desired by Addison to supply. If the request was sincere, it proceeded from an opinion, whatever it was, that did not last long ; for when Hughes came in a week to shew him his first attempt, he found half the act written by Addison himself.

H U G H E S. 9

He afterwards published the works of *Spenser*, with his Life, a Glossary, and a Discourse on Allegorical Poetry; a work for which he was well qualified, as a judge of the beauties of writing, but perhaps wanted an antiquary's knowledge of the obsolete words. He did not much revive the curiosity of the publick; for near thirty years elapsed before his edition was reprinted. The same year produced his *Apollo and Daphne*, of which the success was very earnestly promoted by Steele, who, when the rage of party did not misguide him, seems to have been a man of boundless benevolence.

Hughes had hitherto suffered the mortifications of a narrow fortune; but in

1717 the lord chancellor Cowper set him at ease, by making him secretary to the Commissions of the Peace; in which he afterwards, by a particular request, desired his successor lord Parker to continue him. He had now affluence; but such is human life, that he had it when his declining health could neither allow him long possession nor quick enjoyment.

His last work was his tragedy, *The Siege of Damascus*; after which *a Siege* became a popular title. This play, which still continues on the Stage, and of which it is unnecessary to add a private voice to such continuance of approbation, is not acted or printed according

according to the author's original draught, or his settled intention. He had made *Phocyas* apostatize from his religion; after which the abhorrence of *Eudocia* would have been reasonable, his misery would have been just, and the horrors of his repentance exemplary. The players, however, required that the guilt of *Phocyas* should terminate in desertion to the enemy; and Hughes, unwilling that his relations should lose the benefit of his work, complied with the alteration.

He was now weak with a lingering consumption, and not able to attend the rehearsal; yet was so vigorous in his faculties, that only ten days before
his

his death he wrote the dedication to his patron lord Cooper. On February 17, 1719-20, the play was represented, and the author died. He lived to hear that it was well received; but paid no regard to the intelligence, being then wholly employed in the meditations of a departing Christian.

A man of his character was undoubtedly regretted; and Steele devoted an essay, in the paper called *The Theatre*, to the memory of his virtues. His Life is written in the *Biographia* with some degree of favourable partiality; and an account of him is prefixed to his works, by his relation the late Mr. Duncombe, a man whose blameless elegance deserved the same respect.

The

The character of his genius I shall transcribe from the correspondence of *Swift* and *Pope*.

A month ago," says Swift, " was
 " sent me over, by a friend of mine,
 " the works of *John Hughes*, Esquire.
 " They are in prose and verse. I ne-
 " ver heard of the man in my life,
 " yet I find your name as a subscriber.
 " He is too great a poet for me ; and
 " I think among the *mediocrits*, in prose
 " as well as verse."

To this Pope returns : " To answer
 " your question as to Mr. *Hughes*;
 " what he wanted in genius, he made
 " up as an honest man ; but he was of
 " the class you think him."

